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## Beats Per Minute: Exploring The Impact Of Violence And Neighborhood Conditions On Adolescents In Philadelphia Neighborhoods

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# Beats Per Minute: Exploring The Impact Of Violence And Neighborhood Conditions On Adolescents In Philadelphia Neighborhoods

## Abstract

Exposure to violence and adverse neighborhood conditions in adolescence represent unique traumas that disrupt developmental milestones and have long-term health consequences, such as increased risk of cardiovascular disease. Research on the impacts of both violence and adverse neighborhood conditions has primarily been quantitative and has relied on pre-determined understandings of violence. Less is known about how adolescents define violence, and what causes them to feel stress and fear in real-time. This study fills this gap by using ethnographic methods and innovative technology to explore the ways in which violence and neighborhood environments impact adolescents. Twelve older adolescents, aged 16 through 21-years-old, were recruited from two youth-focused centers in different areas of Philadelphia. Findings from this research highlight the voices of older adolescents and will inform policy and programmatic interventions around violence. Though much is known about the long-term detrimental impacts to health and well-being resulting from exposure to violence, poverty, and adverse neighborhood conditions in adolescence, there is a lack of understanding around what causes adolescents to experience fear and stress in their neighborhoods in real time. The evidence is skewed toward younger adolescents, as they are an easier population to gain access to through schools. Further, little is known about how adolescents define and experience violence in their own words. For example, we know that place matters when it comes to exposure, but we do not know the mechanisms through which place matters. Capturing adolescents' conceptualizations of their neighborhoods and experiences could help shed light on this. Too often, policies and practices are imposed onto communities and individuals without considering their lived experiences. This study addresses this need and fills this gap through the use of innovative mixed methods, including tracking the biometrics of adolescents as they go throughout their day as well as in-home and mobile interviews to capture their lived experiences of violence and their neighborhoods.

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BEATS PER MINUTE: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE AND  
NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS ON ADOLESCENTS IN PHILADELPHIA

NEIGHBORHOODS

Kalen Flynn

A DISSERTATION

in

School of Social Policy & Practice

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

in

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2018

Supervisor of Dissertation

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### *Dedication page*

My father used to say, "The most dangerous thing in the world is an educated woman". He would often tell me that an education would be the most valuable thing I could give myself and he set no limits for my potential. When I wanted to be an environmental lawyer, he would give me old law school textbooks. When I moved to California to work with gang-involved youth, he called me every day after work to tell me he was proud of me and would remind me that the work was important when it felt insurmountable. When I decided to get my Masters in Social Work, he told me not to stop there, that he saw me with a doctorate working to make the world a better place.

He believed that place makes a difference in the lives of people. When I was just a young girl riding through neighborhoods with him, I would bombard him with questions about the spaces and people we saw. He would gently respond that there was little difference between "us" and "them", except that we lived in different parts of the city and were exposed to different things. These conversations were the seeds from which this dissertation grew. To say I would not be the person I am if not for him is an understatement. This dissertation would not have been possible without him, though not here physically, he was with me every step of the way. It is with all of my love that I dedicate this work to his memory.

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To my sisters, whose constant support in the form of encouragement, pep talks, and sometimes wine, has meant more to me than I could write here. My brothers, who helped keep levity in my life throughout this process. My nieces and nephews, who remind me every day the importance of this work. My friends, who managed to ensure that I took care of myself at my roughest points and were understanding when my research took over my social life.

To my chair, Dr. Roberta Rehner Iversen, who has been a pillar of support throughout my career, and without whom this project surely would not have succeeded. I am grateful beyond words for the countless hours and unfathomable energy you have put into this work. My committee members, Dr. Deborah Thomas and Dr. Douglas Wiebe. Dr. Thomas' support and willingness to walk through my qualitative data at all stages was invaluable. This project was born out of conversations with Dr. Wiebe. Without his generosity and thought partnership, this project would not have had wings.

My gatekeepers, whose investment in this project from the beginning helped me to stay focused on the work. And, most importantly, my participants whose willingness to fully engage in the work made the project worthwhile.

## ABSTRACT

### BEATS PER MINUTE: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS ON ADOLESCENTS IN PHILADELPHIA NEIGHBORHOODS

Kalen Flynn

Roberta Rehner Iversen

Exposure to violence and adverse neighborhood conditions in adolescence represent unique traumas that disrupt developmental milestones and have long-term health consequences, such as increased risk of cardiovascular disease. Research on the impacts of both violence and adverse neighborhood conditions has primarily been quantitative and has relied on pre-determined understandings of violence. Less is known about how adolescents define violence, and what causes them to feel stress and fear in real-time. This study fills this gap by using ethnographic methods and innovative technology to explore the ways in which violence and neighborhood environments impact adolescents. Twelve older adolescents, aged 16 through 21-years-old, were recruited from two youth-focused centers in different areas of Philadelphia. Findings from this research highlight the voices of older adolescents and will inform policy and programmatic interventions around violence. Though much is known about the long-term detrimental impacts to health and well-being resulting from exposure to violence, poverty, and adverse neighborhood conditions in adolescence, there is a lack of understanding around what causes adolescents to experience fear and stress in their neighborhoods in real time. The evidence is skewed toward younger adolescents, as they are an easier population to gain

access to through schools. Further, little is known about how adolescents define and experience violence in their own words. For example, we know that place matters when it comes to exposure, but we do not know the mechanisms through which place matters. Capturing adolescents' conceptualizations of their neighborhoods and experiences could help shed light on this. Too often, policies and practices are imposed onto communities and individuals without considering their lived experiences. This study addresses this need and fills this gap through the use of innovative mixed methods, including tracking the biometrics of adolescents as they go throughout their day as well as in-home and mobile interviews to capture their lived experiences of violence and their neighborhoods.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	III
ABSTRACT.....	IV
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	IX
<b>CHAPTER ONE: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS ON ADOLESCENTS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Background and Significance .....	1
Literature Review.....	3
Violence in the United States Context. ....	3
Impact of Exposure to Violence on Adolescents. ....	4
Longitudinal Impacts of Adverse Experiences and Stress. ....	8
Violence and Space-Time. ....	12
Summary. ....	15
Overview of Chapters .....	16
<b>CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND SENSITIZING CONCEPTS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Sensitizing Concepts.....	19
Types of Violence .....	20
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN, SETTING, SAMPLE, AND METHODS.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Research Setting and Participant Selection.....	24
Participant Selection / Sampling. ....	26
Data Collection Procedure .....	28
Data Management .....	33
Data Analysis Plan.....	34
Qualitative analysis. ....	34
Spatial analysis. ....	36
Trustworthiness and Rigor.....	36



Triangulation and rigor.....	37
Issues of validity and rigor. ....	37
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: FOREGROUNDING VIOLENCE: SEEN AND UNSEEN MARKERS OF VIOLENCE .....</b>	<b>39</b>
Commonality of Interpersonal Violence.....	39
Neighborhood violence. ....	40
Violence at home.....	45
Violence in schools. ....	49
Police Interactions and Youth.....	54
Symbolic, Structural, and Physical Violence: Intersecting Forms of Violence in the Everyday .....	63
Tasha’s story. ....	63
Conclusion .....	68
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SPACE AND IDENTITY .....</b>	<b>69</b>
Constructing Boundaries: Restrictions and Adaptions in Movement.....	69
“I would say it’s alive”: Metaphorical Representations of Space.....	72
“Neighborhood means family”: Affective Expectations for Space .....	77
“The North Philly in me came out”: Constructing Identity in Relation to Space.....	79
Intersections of Place and Identity: Gentrification and Whiteness.....	82
Kalia’s story. ....	82
Conclusion .....	86
<b>CHAPTER SIX: HEART RATE AND PLACE .....</b>	<b>87</b>
Urban ACE and Heart Rate.....	88
Walking Interviews: Benefits of Motion .....	101
Complicating Neighborhood as an Aspect of Analysis .....	102
Conclusion .....	104
<b>CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS.....</b>	<b>106</b>

Discussion .....	108
Violence Conceptualized.....	108
Space, Development, and the “Neighborhood”. .....	110
Limitations .....	112
Implications.....	114
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>117</b>
Appendix A. Introductory Interview .....	117
Appendix B. Family History Interview Guide .....	124
Appendix C. Assent to Participate in Research.....	125
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>130</b>

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1. Bronfrenbrenner’s Ecological Theory Model.....	19
Table 1. Neighborhood Demographics. ....	25
Table 2. Participant Characteristics.....	26
Table 3. Mapping Methods to Questions .....	28
Table 4. Stages of Thematic Analysis .....	34
Figure 2. Thematic Map: Violence .....	35
Figure 3. Thematic Map: Space .....	35
Figure 4. Thematic Map: Heart Rate.....	36
Table 5. UrbanACE Score by Participant .....	87
Figure 5. Tasha Path Map .....	90
Figure 6. Connor Path Map .....	93
Figure 7. Money Man Path Map .....	95
Figure 8. Alexandra Path Map .....	100
Figure 9. Neighborhood Map .....	103
Figure 10: Participant Path Diagram .....	104
Figure 11. Reimagined Bronfrenbrenner Ecological Theory Model .....	109

## **CHAPTER ONE: Exploring the Impact of Neighborhood Conditions on Adolescents**

### **Background and Significance**

The overarching goal of this study is to explore the ways in which violence and neighborhood environments impact adolescents. Exposure to violence in adolescence represents a unique trauma that hampers development and disrupts milestones such as identity formation, individuation and interpersonal relationships (Cooley-Strickland et al., 2009; Fowler, Tompsett, Braciszewski, Jacques-Tiura, & Baltes, 2009; Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998; Mrug, Loosier, & Windle, 2008; Mrug & Windle, 2010; Zona & Milan, 2011). This exposure can be indirect, like witnessing or hearing about a violent event, or direct, like experiencing violence firsthand either as a perpetrator and/or a victim.

Although exposure to violence is related to a range of adverse outcomes, not all adolescents exposed to violence experience these outcomes (such as anxiety, depression, aggression, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Experiences of violence are also place bound, often occurring within neighborhoods, homes, and schools. Much of the research on exposure to violence and its impact on adolescents typically focuses on a singular context (school, home, community), though urban youth typically experience violence across multiple contexts.

Violence may be just one of many stressors occurring within an adolescent's environment. Neighborhood conditions have been shown to impact many aspects of well-being in adolescents and young adults. Experiences with poverty, limited resources such as parks and recreation centers, widespread vacant lots and buildings, and everyday

exposure to crime (i.e. drug sales and prostitution), have been shown to influence educational outcomes, familial and peer relationships, and the mental health of adolescents developing in urban neighborhoods (Anderson, Shinn, & St, 2002; Astell-Burt, Maynard, Lenguerrand, & Harding, 2012; Basta, Richmond, & Wiebe, 2010; Bell & Jenkins, 1993; Sampson, Sharkey, & Raudenbush, 2008; Sampson, Morenoff, Gannon-Rowley, & Morenoff, 2015; Sharkey, 2010; Sharkey & Faber, 2014).

Many studies on the impact of neighborhood conditions and violence on adolescents focus on middle-school aged youth, or retrospectively on adults, as they assess the impact of traumatic or stressful life events (Cronholm et al., 2015; Finkelhor, Shattuck, Turner, & Hamby, 2014; Finkelhor, Turner, Shattuck, & Hamby, 2015; Wade, Shea, Rubin, & Wood, 2014; Wade et al., 2015). Moreover, the majority of studies, including ethnographic work on violence, focus on males (Anderson, 2000; Bourgois, 2002; Contreras, 2012; Jones, 2009). As such there is a dearth of information on the real-time impact of neighborhood conditions and violence on older adolescents (ages 16 to 21) and on female adolescents especially. This study sought to fill this gap by exploring the lived experiences of male and female older adolescents (ages 16 to 21) growing up in two Philadelphia neighborhoods. Conceptualizing older adolescents as including those up to 21 years-of-age is in line with recent research on neurological maturation (Curtis, 2015). Through the use of technology, I capture the heart rate and activity paths of adolescents as they go through their day, which approximates the fear and stress they experience in real-time. Sedentary and walking interviews through their neighborhoods give context to the heart rate data and capture the adolescents' experiences in their

neighborhoods. Together, interview, heart rate, and mapping information provides an in-depth understanding of the ways in which the adolescent's environment is linked to their experiences with violence, fear, and stress. This understanding provides context for more tailored interventions and policies aimed at promoting safety among adolescents. For example, violence prevention programs are typically aimed at individual level behavior change, but information gained from this study reveals that structural changes, such as greening vacant lots or increasing the number of parks, are potentially more impactful for violence prevention.

## **Literature Review**

**Violence in the United States Context.** Violence has been a frequent topic of inquiry across disciplines including social work, anthropology, sociology, criminology, epidemiology, and public health. As a research topic, the definition of violence is often dependent on the context of the study, the discipline in which the research resides, and the overarching purpose of the inquiry. The dominant paradigm in the United States (US) context has been to define violence as interpersonal, physical acts. The majority of domestic research on violence follows the World Health Organization's definition of violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a person or against a group or community that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation" (Dahlberg & Krug, 2006, p. 5).

The World Health Organization's definition of violence is broad enough to encompass many forms of violence, such as intimate partner violence, child maltreatment

and abuse, assaults, community violence, homicides, gang violence, and the like. Much of the research on violence in the US is quantitative, focused on the collection of data at the individual level. This data-driven approach is partially due to the framing of violence as a public health issue such that the behavior of individuals is scrutinized in an effort to understand underlying patterns and reasoning. The immediate goal of public health efforts is to decrease interpersonal violence through making changes to behavior (e.g. conflict resolution and anger management; and environmental adjustments (e.g. metal detectors at schools and bulletproof glass in windows) to make violence less likely. This is the dominant paradigm through which policy and programmatic interventions targeting violence are developed.

**Impact of Exposure to Violence on Adolescents.** Adolescents growing up in urban environments are especially vulnerable to interpersonal violence exposure. Prevalence estimates have varied greatly and have indicated that 75-95% of urban youth have witnessed at least one violent event in their neighborhood (Malik, 2008; McCabe, Hough, Yeh, Lucchini, & Hazen, 2005). Further, it has been estimated that 90% of urban youth have witnessed interpersonal violence in schools (Flannery, Wester & Singer, 2004); and approximately 17-25% in their home (O'Brien, John, Margolin, & Erel, 1994; Hotton, 2003). In addition to these estimates of indirect exposure, it has been estimated that 50-68% of inner-city youth have experienced direct victimization (MacMillan & Hagen, 2004; Menard, 2002). Recent research by Finkelhor and colleagues (2014) has sought to get a more accurate understanding of exposure to interpersonal violence among adolescents. Using data from both the 2011 and 2014 National Survey of Children's

Exposure to Violence, coupled with data from the 2013 Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire, they estimated that 60.8% of the youth, aged 10 through 17, surveyed had at least one form of direct exposure to interpersonal violence over the past year. This included relational aggression, dating violence, physical intimidation, assaults with weapons, sexual violence, and Internet harassment among other forms. When witnessing and other indirect exposure to interpersonal violence were included, the percentage rose to 67.5% of youth with at least one exposure. Additionally, Finkelhor and colleagues (2014) found that exposure to types of interpersonal violence was related in that exposure to one type of violence increased the likelihood of exposure to another type; risks for additional exposure to interpersonal violence increased by a factor of 2 or more for most past-year and lifetime exposure. These findings include responses from older adolescents (ages 15 to 17), suggesting that youth across the developmental spectrum encounter violence within multiple contexts.

Given the above estimates it is clear that urban youth experience violence across multiple contexts. The extant literature on exposure to violence within singular contexts provides initial insight on the adverse outcomes of such exposures. These outcomes include externalizing (i.e. conduct disorder and aggressive behavior) and internalizing (i.e. depression and anxiety) symptomologies, as well as poor academic performance and an increased likelihood to perpetrate future violence (Copeland-Linder, Lambert, & Ialongo, 2010; Fowler et al., 2009; Kelly et al., 2012). In a study examining the relationship between violence exposure, trauma, and delinquency in girls, aged 12 to 18, Podgurski, Lyons, Kisiel, and Griffin (2014) found that exposure to violence in school



had a strong correlation with externalizing symptomologies, especially conduct disorder, often leading to involvement with the justice system. Studies on the impact of neighborhood and community violence report similar findings. Exposure to high levels of neighborhood violence is associated with higher levels of both externalizing and internalizing symptomologies (Fowler et al., 2009; Kelly et al., 2012; Zona & Milan, 2011). Given the abundance of research on exposure to violence within singular contexts, and the negative impacts on development, it is noteworthy that little is known about the effects of multi-contextual violence exposure.

Few studies have specifically examined the effects of multi-contextual violence exposure, though it often exists within general exposure to violence. One study examined cumulative exposure to violence and its impact on adjustment among adolescents (Mrug et al., 2008). This study found that high levels of exposure to community violence mitigated the relationship between home violence and internalizing symptomologies, such as depression and anxiety, and between school violence and externalizing symptomologies, such as conduct disorder or deviant behavior, suggesting that this exposure may desensitize youth to the effects of violence across other contexts (Mrug et al., 2008). A second study by Mrug (2010) examined both indirect (witnessing/hearsay) and direct (victimization/ perpetration) exposure to violence across contexts. This study found that witnessing violence in various contexts was associated with higher levels of internalized symptomologies and desensitization. Both studies were limited by focusing on early adolescence (youth ages 11-13). Exposure to violence is cumulative in nature such that witnessing one event increases the likelihood of witnessing another, thus older

adolescents tend to report higher rates of both victimization and perpetration (Gianconia et al., 1995; Kilpatrick et al., 2003). For example, Kilpatrick et al. (2003) found that older adolescents, aged 15-17, were more likely to report witnessed violence, physical assault and sexual assault than younger adolescents.

In youth exposed to violence, trauma symptoms are often comorbid with conduct disorder, attention deficit disorder, depression, anxiety, aggression, and other functional disorders (Cooley-Strickland et al., 2009; Fowler et al., 2009; Lambert, Boyd, Cammack, & Ialongo, 2012; Scarpa, Haden, & Hurley, 2012; Ortiz, Richards, Kohl, and Zaadah, 2008; Zona & Milan, 2011)). In a national telephone survey of 4,023 adolescents (ages 12 through 17) examining the risk of PTSD, depression, substance abuse, and comorbidity among youth exposed to violence, Kilpatrick and colleagues (2003) found that 11% of youth met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD, and of these youth 75% had at least one comorbid diagnosis. These diagnoses often interrupt development, significantly disrupting such milestones as identity, self-perception, and individuation, while also impacting academic performance and the formation of social relationships (Habib & Labruna, 2011; Nurius et al., 2009). Gianconcia and colleagues (1995) examined the impact of PTSD on 18-year-olds who were participating in an on-going longitudinal study, finding that these youth had more overall behavioral and emotional issues, interpersonal problems, suicide attempts, health issues, and poorer academic performance than their peers. Additionally, they found that youth who experienced trauma but did not have a PTSD diagnosis shared many of these deficits (Gianconcia et al., 1995).

Youth who experience multiple traumas are at higher risk for developmental interruptions and typically have poor mental health outcomes (Cammack, Lambert, & Ialongo, 2010; Cooley-Strickland et al., 2009; Fowler et al., 2009; Rasmussen, Aber, & Bhana, 2004; Rosario, Salzinger, Feldman, & Ng-Mak, 2008; Zona & Milan, 2011). Moreover, many studies have found a strong positive relationship between exposure to violence and the level of trauma symptomologies reported by youth (Cammack et al., 2010; Fowler et al., 2009; Scarpa, Haden, & Hurley, 2012). Kilpatrick and colleagues (2003) found that exposure to interpersonal violence increased the risk of PTSD, depression, and substance abuse, after controlling for demographic information and familial substance abuse problems. Using parent-reports and child-reports of youth (median ages 10 to 12) violence exposure from three waves of a prospective, longitudinal study, Margolin and Vickerman (2011) found that exposure to family violence can complicate PTSD diagnoses, as many children exposed to this type of violence meet the criteria for several diagnoses.

**Longitudinal Impacts of Adverse Experiences and Stress.** Studies using the Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey (ACES) to examine the longitudinal health impacts of exposure to interpersonal violence within the home, such as child abuse and maltreatment, have illuminated the connection between physical well-being and exposure to violence. Many of these studies focus on adults and use the ACES to retrospectively get a sense of lifetime exposure to interpersonal violence and other adversities. These studies show a linkage between adverse childhood experiences and health risk behaviors, such as smoking, substance use, and risky sexual behavior, health status, and diseases,

such as diabetes, heart disease and early mortality in adulthood (Anda et al., 2006; Bellis, Lowey, Leckenby, Hughes, & Harrison, 2014; Danese & McEwen, 2012; Flaherty et al., 2013; Kalmakis & Chandler, 2014; Karandinos, Hart, Montero Castrillo, & Bourgois, 2014; Monnat & Chandler, 2015; Reiser, McMillan, Wright, & Asmundson, 2014; Salinas-Miranda et al., 2015; Wade et al., 2014). Work focusing on the impact of adverse childhood experiences on children and adolescents shows associations between these and negative outcomes such as decreased school engagement, depression, anxiety, risk-taking behavior, drug abuse, antisocial behavior, chronic medical conditions, and the like (Bethell, Newacheck, Hawes, & Halfon, 2014; Flaherty et al., 2013; Goodman, McEwen, Dolan, Schafer-Kalkhoff, & Adler, 2005; Kerker et al., 2015; Schilling, Aseltine, & Gore, 2007).

Across all age groups, evidence suggests that the relationship between adverse experiences and negative health outcomes acts as a dose-response relationship such that the likelihood of negative health outcomes increases with more exposure to adverse experiences. Felitti and colleagues' (1998) seminal work with the ACES demonstrated that individuals who identified four or more ACE have a markedly increased risk for adult health problems, including ischemic heart disease, skeletal fractures, and risky health behavior, when compared to individuals who did not identify any ACE. Further, Danese and McEwen (2012) reviewed two decades of research on the impact of adverse experiences on long-term health outcomes; these studies illustrated the impact of ACE on biological systems (nervous, endocrine, and immune) responsible for maintaining physiological stability. The greater the number of ACE experienced, the more enduring

the impact on these systems. Moreover, changes in these biological systems were present in childhood and remained apparent through adulthood.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey (ACES) work has helped to build understanding of the ways in which experiencing adversity in the home in the form of child abuse (physical and emotional), maltreatment, domestic violence, divorce and separation, and the incarceration of a main caregiver impacts long-term health outcomes. However, this knowledge base is inherently limited as it primarily relies on data collected from white, middle- to upper- class individuals, and solely examines experiences occurring within the home.

Recent work by research teams at the Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania (CHOP) has sought to expand the conventional ACES by including questions regarding community-level exposure with a more socio-economically and racially diverse sample. Wade et al. (2014) began this process by holding twelve focus groups with young adults, aged 18 through 26, who grew up in a Philadelphia neighborhood with at least 20 percent of residents living at or below the Federal Poverty Level, to generate a list of community-level stressors and to critically examine the conventional ACE. Their findings indicated that some of the original questions on the survey, for example regarding the impact of divorce and separation, were not relevant to the focus group participants. The focus groups generated new domains around sources of stress that were especially relevant for children in urban environments: single-parent homes, exposure to violence (community level), exposure to criminal behavior, personal victimization, bullying, and economic hardship.

Working with the Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC), the CHOP team used the themes generated by the focus group to create survey questions for the PHMC's 2012 public health survey of Philadelphia. Of the 1,784 respondents, all 18 and older, the bulk of whom were between the ages of 35 and 64, 72.9 percent had at least one Conventional ACE, 63.4 percent experienced at least one Expanded ACE, and 49.3 percent experienced both. Similar to past studies, the team found that increased exposure to Conventional ACE were associated with health risk behaviors, as well as adverse outcomes in both physical and mental health. Higher scores on the Expanded ACE were also associated with risky health behaviors, including substance use and sexually transmitted infections. Additionally, the results indicated that socio-economic status was a major contributor to experiencing both Conventional and Expanded ACE (Cronholm et al., 2015; PHMC, 2014; Wade et al., 2016).

Findings from the above work begin to shed light on the impact of the environment, including exposure to violence, on well-being metrics later in life. Studies examining the impact of socio-economic status and poverty on health in both adolescents and adults also begin to shed light on the impacts of environment. Experiencing poverty in childhood is a strong predictor of adverse health outcomes, especially type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease, sensory regulation, hypothalamic-pituitary adrenal function, disruptions in cognitive and social competencies, and elevations in cortisol among other outcomes (Raphael, 2011). In a study examining the intersection of race and childhood exposure to poverty, Nikulina and Widom (2014) found that family poverty combined

with neighborhood poverty predicted pulmonary functioning in adulthood among African Americans. Other studies have also considered the contexts in which people spend time.

**Violence and Space-Time.** Interpersonal violence is intrinsically linked to both space and time in that the physical and social aspects of the environment and the temporal nature of the event(s) and exposure directly impact the effect such violence has on the individual. Ethnographic evidence has illuminated the disproportionate morbidity and mortality rates that link geography and violence. Anderson's (1999) *Code of the Street* (1999), Bourgois' (2002) *In Search of Respect*, Contreras' (2012) *The Stick-Up Kids*, Jones' (2009) *Between Good and Ghetto*, and Thomas' (2011) *Exceptional Violence* each offer insights on the ways in which violence and its impact are linked to both place and time. These works also demonstrate the ways in which interpersonal violence emerges both from the everyday and also from historical, political, and economic events and structural realities, including the legacies of colonialism and neoliberal policies. Disenfranchised communities and populations do not receive the resources they need to fully participate in the citizenry and lead a healthy life. For example, the works from Bourgois (2002), Anderson (1999), and Contreras (2012) show how the history of particular spaces – the neighborhoods in which they conducted their research – is created by processes of disinvestment that affect housing and employment, policing practices and the war on drugs, and the like. Overall, these histories cumulatively shape what is possible for individual actors living in these neighborhoods that come to be marked by violence; that is, the structural disadvantage (historical and contemporary) that leads to interpersonal violence. The violence occurring within these

neighborhoods marks the lives of all individuals living in that space by heightening concerns of safety, fear, and stress, which are concerns that, in turn, can result in increased rates of heart disease, diabetes, anxiety, and trauma symptomologies as outlined in the section above. One limitation of most of these ethnographic works is their intense focus on the experiences of male adolescents and young adults. Nikki Jones' (2009) seminal ethnographic work *Between Good and Ghetto*, began to address the gender gap in literature by focusing on the experiences of adolescent girls in a Philadelphia Neighborhood. As Jones' (2009) aptly observes:

Adolescent girls and boys, growing up in neighborhoods characterized by concentrated poverty and unpredictable violence, are necessarily preoccupied with survival. They understand that stray bullets do not discriminate between young and old, guilt and innocence, or boys and girls. Inner-city girls know that the settings of inner-city life, whether school buildings or row houses, neighborhood street corners or porch stoop, do not come with a special girls-only pass to live beyond the reach of violence. (p.6)

This quote underscores the need for more in-depth study of the impacts of violence and neighborhood stresses on adolescent girls. By highlighting and exploring the impact on colonial legacies on violence transnationally, Deborah Thomas' (2009, 2011, 2012, 2013) work challenges researchers to contemplate the ways in which historical trajectories produce spaces that become associated with violence and encourages research to probe more deeply into the everyday effects of the relationship between violence and space.

Increasingly, epidemiological and sociological work has focused on the places in which individuals spend time. Robert Sampson's (1997, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2013) work has illustrated that crime and violence are intrinsically linked to space, and that even though crime patterns can shift, they are often concentrated within the same



neighborhoods. Sampson attributes this to collective efficacy, a concept that captures the social cohesiveness of neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good (Sampson, 1997). Along similar lines, Patrick Sharkey (2013) used longitudinal data on white and African American families to posit that place matters first and foremost because neighborhood inequality has been inherited. In his work, *Stuck in Place* (2013), Sharkey theorizes that family effects cannot be isolated from neighborhood effects, stating:

Aspects of family background such as parental income and education, are likely to be influenced by neighborhood conditions in the prior generation. In this sense, individuals and families *embody* neighborhood histories, and these histories can have consequences that extend across generations. (p.134, original emphasis)

While neighborhood and community matter, some research shows that where you spend time acts as a dose-response effect, whereby as the exposure increases so does the effect, in terms of health outcomes. Sharkey (2014) has argued that most people do not stay within the confines of their home or neighborhood throughout (or during) the day, thus the amount of time an individual spends in various places such as home, neighborhood, school, work, public transportation and the like, corresponds to the extent of risk or protective features to which they are exposed. In a case-control study on risk for assault with a weapon in Philadelphia, Wiebe et al. (2016) used geographical data to show that there are peaks and valleys of risk across Philadelphia, and that when individuals spend time in “peak” areas, they are at greater risk of being assaulted. This study was groundbreaking in the methodology used to explore how the minute-by-minute activities and locations of adolescents influence the likelihood that they will engage in risky behaviors. To get at this, Wiebe et al. (2016) used detailed space-time modeling of

the step-by-step movement of adolescents, relying on the participants' recollection of their day. As the participant mapped their day, they answered questions about factors typically associated with exposure to violence and risky behavior: for example, who they were with, how they traveled to each place, if there were weapons present, and how safe they felt. This study was the first of its kind and the results helped to advance our understanding of violence while also illustrating the intimate relationship between space and violence.

**Summary.** Though much work has been done to better understand linkages between violence, neighborhoods, gender, age, and the longitudinal health implications of adverse experience, gaps in knowledge remain. The way violence is defined by much of the literature is limited in scope and, thus, may fail to fully capture the experiences of youth. Violence research is typically quantitative in nature and focused on middle-school aged youth, and when older youth are the subject of study the narrative is typically that of males. The voices of older adolescents, especially females, have been mostly left out of the knowledge base. Further, though much is known about the importance of neighborhoods, less is known about how older youth experience and feel about the spaces they spend time in, and how these experiences and feelings impact their day-to-day lives and health. Understanding these linkages better could help to illuminate the mechanisms through which encountering adverse experiences in childhood and young adulthood results in long-term health impacts and disparities. This study sought to address the aforementioned gaps in the literature using qualitative methods and a case study design to

integrate the experiences of twelve older adolescents, aged 16 to 21 years-old. The research questions are as follows:

1. How do youth, aged 16 to 21, living in Philadelphia experience and conceptualize violence?
2. How do these youth experience and conceptualize their neighborhoods and other social spaces in their daily lives?
3. What physiological responses do these youth experience as they move through the day?
4. How are space and violence related to these physiological reactions?

### **Overview of Chapters**

Chapter Two provides a conceptual and theoretical frame for the research and overviews the sensitizing concepts that emerged as the research unfolded.

Chapter Three lays out the research design, setting, and methods. This study used a multiple case study design with ethnographic, physiological, and cartographic methods. A holistic design was used to study twelve cases from Philadelphia: six male and six female older adolescents, 16-21 years-of-age. Six to eight interviews were conducted with each youth over a period of three to four weeks per youth. A total of 85 interviews and 100 hours of field work were conducted.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six delineate the findings of the study. Chapter Four foregrounds the violence experienced by youth in the study. Chapter Five lays out the youths' conceptualizations of space and neighborhood. Chapter Six overviews the

methodological findings, including knowledge gained from their heart rate data and the ways in which this study has interrogated notions of neighborhood.

Chapter Seven provides a discussion of the findings, outlines directions for future research, and concludes with implications of the research for policy and practice.

## **CHAPTER TWO: Conceptual Framework and Sensitizing Concepts**

The overarching goal of this study was to explore the ways in which violence and neighborhood environments impact adolescents. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (1977, 1979, 1986, 1999) provides a framework for thinking through both the connections between violence and neighborhood environments and their impact on adolescents. This theory posits that human development is shaped by interactions between the individual and their environment. Bronfenbrenner identifies four subsystems of the environment that influence human development: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Figure 1). The microsystem refers to the individuals, institutions, and systems that directly impact the individual (i.e. family, school, social workers). At this level, interpersonal violence at the individual level would occur, which would include intimate partner violence, child maltreatment, bullying, and direct victimization or pursuing acts of violence. The mesosystem is primarily composed of interactions with the microsystem as well as the individual's neighborhood or community. Interactions between the child and his/her peers and the child and his/her family are one example of this type of interaction. At this level, interpersonal violence at the community or neighborhood level and the conditions of the adolescent's neighborhood would be impactful. This could include witnessing or hearing about violence within their community, or the absence of city-funded recreation centers. The exosystem refers to institutions in which the youth is not immediately present but which have direct impact on him/her. At this level, the adolescent is impacted by things such as media representation, job discrimination, policing policies (i.e. Stop and Frisk), or the

closure of local schools. The macro-system refers to the cultural context in which the youth is developing, which includes socioeconomic status and belonging to a group with a common identity or heritage. At this level, the adolescent is impacted by discrimination, including racism and sexism.

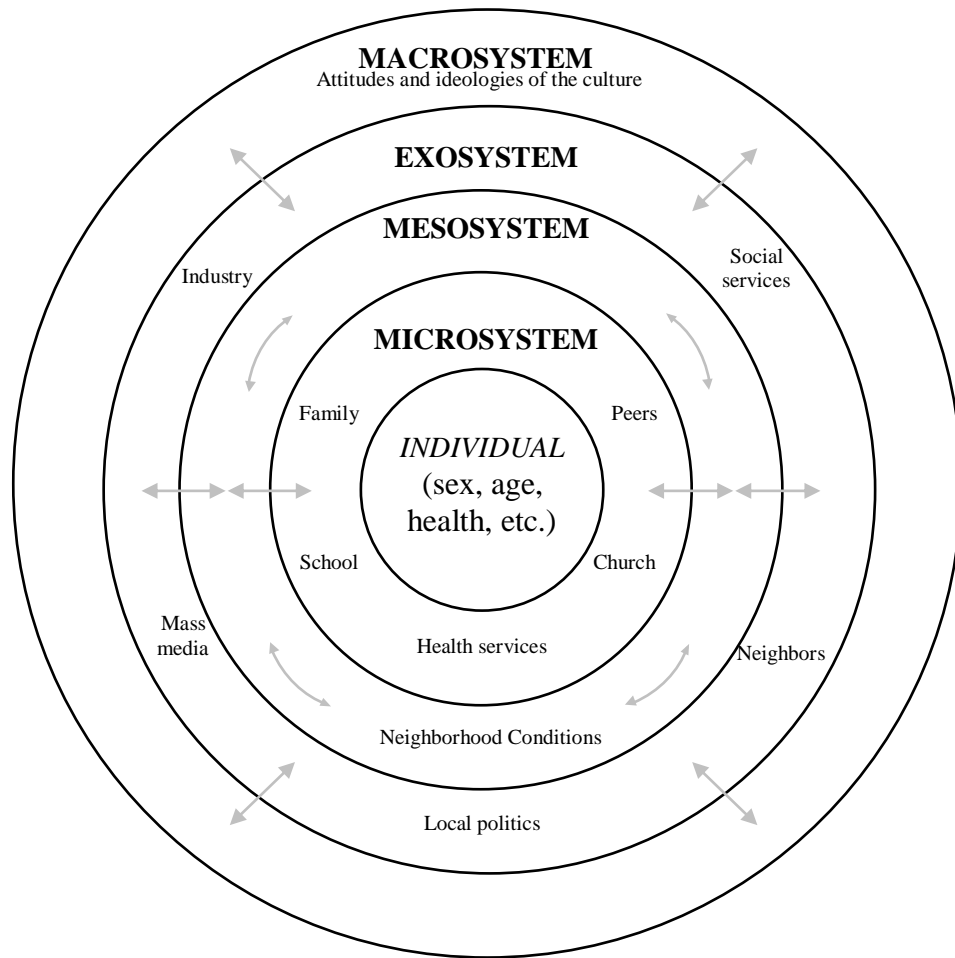


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory Model

### Sensitizing Concepts

As outlined in Chapter One, violence has been a frequent topic of inquiry across disciplines including social work, anthropology, sociology, criminology, and public health. Research on violence has been greatly influenced by the fields of public health

and medicine, and as such has led to a quantifiable definition of violence as a physical event typically occurring between individuals in various milieu (family, community, school, and the like). In contrast, ethnographic works and scholars from the fields of anthropology and sociology have highlighted other, more theoretical, forms of violence that impact populations by restricting their agency as well as affecting their physical and mental health. These include symbolic and structural violence. Structural violence is concerned with the unequal distribution of resources and as such is typically experienced as a collective, making its impact more difficult to quantify. Symbolic violence is concerned with the ways in which differential power relations are established and applied so as to reflect the interests of the dominant cultural group, whereby the dominated group internalize this as the natural order often experiencing negative and harmful effects. Symbolic violence can be understood as a precursor to structural violence such that limited social mobility results in limited access to resources, often also with negative and harmful effects. In a similar way, interpersonal violence can be seen as a result of structural violence such that limited access to resources can result in anger and frustration that is then manifested as interpersonal violence. Amplifications of these concepts, singularly and together, in the literature follows.

### **Types of Violence**

Research in sociology and anthropology has begun to connect theoretical forms of violence, namely structural and symbolic violence, with interpersonal violence. Structural violence is defined as “the indirect violence built into repressive social orders creating enormous differences between potential and actual human self-realization” (Galtung,

1975, p. 173), or as “a positionality that imposes physical/emotional suffering on specific population groups and individuals in a patterned way” (Quesada, Hart, & Bourgois, 2011, p. 340). Colloquially, this form of violence is sometimes referred to as the violence of poverty.

Structural violence is a way of thinking about the unequal distribution of resources, such as food, education, housing, medicine, and the like, across social and class strata as actions by the state. Whereas interpersonal violence is visible in that the direct impacts it has on bodies can be counted and seen, structural violence is more ambiguous and is experienced collectively through forces such as racism, poverty, and socio-economic inequality, making its impacts more difficult to quantify. Paul Farmer (2004) has connected structural violence to Bourdieu’s concept of habitus: "Bourdieu uses the term 'habitus' as a structured and structuring principle. Structural violence is both structured and structuring. It constricts the agency of its victims” (p. 315). Through this lens, the relationship between structural and interpersonal violence becomes clearer. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) posit that the limitations and thus frustrations that come out of structural violence can result in interpersonal violence. Additionally, structural violence can be embodied via internalization, again resulting in interpersonal violence: “Crucially, daily overlaps with violence are suffused with broader structural violence...The oppressive structural violence, frustrations and punishing poverty inevitably spill into and cross over to interpersonal violence in everyday life” (DeVerteuil, 2015, p. 220). This relationship can be seen domestically and worldwide;



exposures to interpersonal violence are higher in more unequal societies (Blau & Blau, 1982; Wolf, Gray, & Fazel, 2014).

Symbolic violence is less tangible than both interpersonal and structural violence. Symbolic violence is defined by Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992) as “...the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” and is “...the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.19). In other words, symbolic violence is concerned with the ways in which differential power relations are established and applied so as to reflect the interests of the dominant cultural group. As such, the dominated group internalize the differentials as the natural order whereby power dynamics are taken for granted and are considered just. Symbolic violence can be considered a precursor to structural violence (and thus interpersonal violence), in that the less powerful group is denied access to resources and as a result have limited social mobility (Parkin & Coomber, 2009).

In this study, the above sensitizing concepts began to emerge from analytic memos written throughout data collection (see Chapter Three) in relation to my research question: “How do youth, aged 16-21 years-old, living in Philadelphia experience and conceptualize violence?”. Through these memos, it became clear that the youth were describing incidents and experiences that were, in fact, violence but were presenting in theoretical forms. The findings presented in Chapter Four support that youth did experience symbolic and structural forms of violence and illustrated in some cases that these forms linked with interpersonal violence. This connection is demonstrated through Tasha’s story at the end of Chapter Four.

### **CHAPTER 3: Research Design, Setting, Sample, and Methods**

Set in multiple neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia, this study utilized a multiple case design with ethnographic, physiological, and cartographic methods to explore how violence and neighborhoods are perceived and experienced by older adolescents and young adults, aged 16-21. Yin (2009) laid out the criteria for case study research as when a “how” or “why” question is being asked about contemporary events over which the researcher has little to no control. Additionally, case studies have a clear unit of analysis, rely on multiple sources of data, and are guided by propositions. This study meets these criteria as (1) the overarching goal is to understand *how* violence and neighborhood are perceived and experienced by older adolescents and young adults, age 16 through 21; (2) their experiences are contemporary events; (3) the researcher had no control over the events; (4) there is a clear unit of analysis (individual youth); (5) multiple sources of data were used; and (6) the study was guided by propositions.

This study used a holistic design to study twelve cases. The use of multiple cases allowed me to seek theoretical generalization. Relying on qualitative methods allowed me to capture the lived experiences of youth in Philadelphia, thus getting an emic perspective on a complex social problem (Padgett, 2017).

The data collection process typically included seven to eight interviews over a period of three weeks for each participant – a total of 85 interviews overall. Four of each participant’s interviews were done in conjunction with the PocketFinder (a GPS tracking device) and the Garmin Vivosmart HR (fitness band with heart rate technology). Other interviews for each participant included a walking interview in a space of the youth’s

choosing (typically their neighborhood and/or another self-defined relevant space), a family history interview, and a baseline interview with questions from the Urban Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey. Of the twelve cases, only two did not complete the study in full; both cases completed all but the walking interview.

### **Research Setting and Participant Selection**

Recruitment sites were selected based on experiences with and knowledge of Philadelphia, along with data on neighborhoods in Philadelphia. The two recruitment sites were located in Kensington and West Philadelphia, specifically the Belmont neighborhood. Although the recruitment sites were in Kensington and the Belmont neighborhood, the youth who were connected to these centers came from a variety of neighborhoods; both centers focused on aiding marginalized and underserved populations. To give context on the neighborhoods of the recruitment sites, a recent report released from Virginia Commonwealth University and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2016) on life expectancy highlighted the importance of the context of both neighborhoods on the lives of their residents. Kensington has a higher median household income of \$24,698, 66 percent of children live in poverty, 33 percent of its residents are white, 67 percent are nonwhite, and 45 percent are Hispanic, and the violent crime rate is 0.69 per 10,000 residents. The West Philadelphia neighborhood, Belmont, has a median household income of \$22,396, over 75 percent of the children live in poverty, 97 percent of its residents are nonwhite, and the violent crime rate is 1.28 per 100,000. Life expectancy at birth for an individual in West Philadelphia is 74 years of age, and in

Kensington it is 71 years of age. For comparison, the life expectancy at birth for an individual in Society Hill is 88 years of age.

Table 1. Neighborhood Demographics.

	<b>Belmont</b>	<b>Kensington</b>
Median Household Income	\$22,396	\$24,698
Life Expectancy at Birth	74	71
Percent Children in Poverty	75%	66%
Percent Nonwhite Residents	97%	67%
Violent Crime Rate	1.28 (per 100,000 residents)	.69 (per 10,000 residents)

In West Philadelphia, recruitment occurred out of a General Education Development (GED) and Adult Literacy Center. Before recruitment began, I met with the lead teacher, Ms. Laura<sup>1</sup> and spent six weeks building relationships with the youth at the center by attending events and observing classes. Ms. Laura announced the study to the youth and allowed flyers to be placed at the sign-in desk. I also conducted a one hour “Know Your Rights” training for the youth on criminal justice after the study ended. In total, seven of the twelve cases were recruited from this site.

Recruitment in Kensington took place at a non-profit community center. I spent five months at the center prior to beginning recruitment. Because of this community center’s location, and the variety of services and events they offer, youth come from neighborhoods throughout North Philadelphia. During this time, I participated in community events and built relationships with youth and parents. The director of the center, Ms. Jenny, facilitated in the recruitment of five youth for the study.

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<sup>1</sup> All names are pseudonyms.

For anonymity, names of the centers have been omitted and the name of the directors have been changed, as is customary in qualitative research (Padgett, 2017).

**Participant Selection / Sampling.** Because of the gaps in the literature outlined in Chapter One, the target population for this study was male and female older adolescents and young adults, ages 16 through 21. Eligibility criteria for the study were:

- Male or female youth, 16 through 21 years of age
- Must reside in Philadelphia
- Cannot be under house arrest
- Female participants cannot have a known pregnancy at the time of recruitment

Using purposive sampling, twelve cases were recruited for the study. The twelve cases were divided evenly by gender; nine identified as Black and three identified as Puerto Rican. Table 2 describes the cases, using self-disclosed age, race, and gender:

Table 2. Participant Characteristics

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race/ Ethnicity</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Primary Neighborhood</b>
Kalia	16	Puerto Rican	Female	Kensington
Isabel	18	Puerto Rican	Female	Kensington
Boston	17	Black	Male	Mount Airy
Mouse	19	Puerto Rican	Male	Tioga
Alexandra	17	Black	Female	Northeast
Desmond	21	Black	Female	West Philadelphia
Money Man	17	Black	Male	West Philadelphia
Conner	17	Black	Male	West Philadelphia
Kareem	18	Black	Male	West Philadelphia
Kayla	18	Black/ African	Female	West Philadelphia
Future	19	Black	Male	West Philadelphia
Tasha	20	Black	Female	West Philadelphia

Table 2 displays the participants' primary neighborhood, or the neighborhood in which they resided at the time of the study. All of the participants, with the exception of Kayla, had lived in and/or traveled frequently to other neighborhoods within the city. Three of the cases were parents: Tasha, Future, and Mouse. Tasha has three children, two of whom currently live with her. Future and Mouse both had one child; neither was the primary caregiver. Kalia and Isabel are sisters, though Kalia lives with her mother, two younger sisters, and her youngest brother, while Isabel lives with her father, younger brother, and her father's fiancée. Boston and Alexandra each lived in neighborhoods with less crime and higher median incomes than the other participants.

Interested youth would call a Google number or email a unique email address I setup for the study. I met with the youth at either one of the centers or at a location of their choosing, e.g. a neighborhood park. All participants consented to the study. Participants under 18 years-old signed an assent form and had parental consent. Parental consents were sent home with the youth and returned to me, as was customary practice for obtaining parental consent at both recruitment centers. Those over 18 signed consent forms. Of the twelve cases, ten completed the study, and the remaining two - Alexandra and Future - completed all but one interview. Alexandra broke her foot and was unable to complete the walking interview. Future was arrested and placed in lock-up and was unable to complete the walking interview. All participants received compensation for their participation, scaled by the interview schedule. Participants received twenty dollars at the baseline interview, twenty at the end of the four daily overview interviews, and the final twenty at the end of the walking interview.

## Data Collection Procedure

This study relied on multiple forms of data collection methods. Table 3 illustrates how each data method mapped to the research questions that framed this study.

Table 3. Mapping Methods to Questions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Data Collection Method</i>
(1) How do youth, aged 16 to 21, living in Philadelphia experience and conceptualize violence?	(1) Field Observations (2) Baseline Interviews (3) Walking Interviews (4) Daily Overview Interviews (5) Family History Interviews (6) Biometric Data
(2) How do these youth experience and conceptualize their neighborhoods and other social spaces in their daily lives?	(1) Field Observations (2) Baseline Interviews (3) Walking Interviews (4) Daily Overview Interviews
(3) What physiological responses do these youth experience during as they move through the day?	(1) Biometric Data (2) Daily Overview Interviews
(4) How are neighborhood and violence related to these physiological reactions?	(1) Mapping Activity Paths (2) Daily Overview Interviews (3) Biometric Data (4) Walking Interviews

Data collection began in October 2016 with field observations at the recruitment centers and memo-ing. Field observations are sometimes referred to as “naturalistic observations” and are one of the hallmark methods of qualitative research (Padgett, 2017). Field observations of the centers and of the participants’ neighborhoods were developed into more robust notes and memos. Glaser (1978) describes a memo as a “theorizing write up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while doing...it can be a sentence, a paragraph, or a few pages...it exhausts the analyst’s momentary ideation based on data” (pp. 83-84). During the study, I developed two types

of memos: the first were the aforementioned, and the second were theoretical memos that helped me develop codes and theoretical relationships.

Interviewing began in February of 2017 when I met Kalia, my first participant, at her soccer practice in North Philadelphia, and ended in November 2017 with my final interview with Tasha. During this period, 85 interviews were conducted and approximately 100 hours of field work were completed, including observations across neighborhoods and recruitment sites. I met with Kalia, Mouse, and Boston eight times; Isabel, Kareem, Money Man, Kayla, Conner, Desmond, and Tasha seven times; Alexandra six times, and Future five times. In total, I spent about one month with each youth. The amount of time spent with each youth deepened our interviews over time, as youth saw my investment in their lives and stories and we built trust together. Ultimately, this deepened my data collection processes and enriched my findings.

Interviews started with a baseline interview that primarily focused on getting to know the youth's initial thoughts on their neighborhood, family, and friends, and included a series of questions from the Urban Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey. (See guide in Appendix A) At the end of this interview, each youth received the Garmin Vivosmart HR (fitness watch) that measured their heart rate and the PocketFinder (GPS tracker) that tracked their locations every ten minutes. The youth wore both devices for a four-day period, sometimes longer depending on the youth's personal schedule. For example, while he had the devices, Future was hospitalized for a week with a collapsed lung. He had the devices for a longer period of time, though our interviews only focused on the most recent day at the time of the interview.



While wearing the devices, the youth would meet with me for four daily overview interviews. The purpose of these interviews was to gather data on what was happening around them when their heart rate increased, including information about the social and spatial environment. Wiebe and colleagues (2016) used similar methods in their groundbreaking study examining risk of violent assault, the Space-Time Adolescent Risk Study (STARS). For the STARS, Wiebe and his team overlaid the activity path data for 349 assault victims and 206 community controls, all between 10 and 24 years of age, onto environmental maps of Philadelphia in order to assess the relationship between environment and risk of violent assault.<sup>2</sup> Data on each participant's activity path was collected through retrospective interviews where each participant would recount their day to an interviewer. Through a structured interview, the team also collected data on how the youth spent their time, with whom they spent it, as well as where they went. The current study built on this methodology by collecting prospective data on where youth spent their time as well as the inclusion of biometric data.

The uptick in health-based technology has increased the ways in which researchers can collect data. GPS-enabled devices tracking biomarkers, including the Garmin, though typically used for fitness, offer the opportunity to collect data on changes in biometrics throughout the day while linking these changes to locations. Heart rate is a common proxy measure for stress (Kelsey, 2007; Wiebe, 2010). Many researchers opt to measure cortisol levels as a measure of stress (Danese & McEwen, 2012; Goodman et al., 2005), however this requires saliva samples taken at different points of the day and does

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<sup>2</sup> The mapped environmental factors included crime, alcohol expenditures, protective features, demographics, and income.

not allow the researcher to observe nuanced changes in stress levels. Therefore, measuring heart rate is much less intrusive and the data can give a more nuanced picture of stress occurrences throughout the day. This allows the researcher to study place - and time - specific stressors (such as violence) and provides a more nuanced picture of what causes physiological reactions to stress. For example, while testing the technology on myself, my mother was sent to the Intensive Care Unit at a local hospital. I was wearing the watch when I received the call from my sister notifying me at 1PM. When I reviewed my heart rate at the end of the day there was a clear peak at 1PM.

The daily overview interviews were structured around the heart rate data from the watch. The data were easily accessible, and the watch has a user-friendly interface that allowed me to drag a mouse along a graphic representation of the heart rate and see when peaks occurred. Although the watch captures minute-by-minute heart rate data, Garmin's interface does not allow one to download or access this data. As such, when interviewing I would first ask the youth to recount their day and would make note of times when they remembered feeling stressed, frustrated, happy, or when they recounted significant events (e.g. an incident of police brutality). These interviews were crucial to interrogating the differences between peaks caused by happy emotions, cardiac health (i.e. running or soccer), and those caused by prolonged exposures to negative stress. Then we would look at their heart rate graph together and I would mark the time and heart rate for each peak before asking the youth what happened at that time. To aid in their recollection, I would also pull up their timestamped GPS data, which often helped the youth to recall where they were at the time of a peak and what was happening around them.

After the daily overview interviews, I conducted family history interviews. To start these, I would first make a family tree with the youth, going as far back as they could. Most were able to recall at least one great-grandparent. For each relative, I asked a series of questions (see Appendix B) about their life, including where they were born, what they did for a living, if/where they went to school, if they were religious, and how they passed away. These interviews typically opened up a dialogue about how their family stories were passed down. Some youth, like Kalia, Kayla, Kareem, and Boston, knew about most of their relatives; oral histories and large family gatherings were integral to their development. Other youth had little knowledge of their families' histories for a variety of reasons. Desmond, for example, knew little about her family as she spent the majority of her childhood in child welfare placements. Despite this, the format of this interview allowed her to open up about abuses she experienced while in placement and her feelings about being separated from her family for so long:

*You should have told me to ask these questions before so I can get the answers. I don't know much. I was put away all my life. I was in foster care, so I wouldn't know much. I came home when I was 18. I've been through a lot, but I kind of wish I had never treated them like that. I treated them horrible. I don't know, they changed me, they just don't know how they changed me.*

For most of the participants, the family history interviews were the first time they had made a family tree and talked in such an in-depth way about their family history.

The final interview of the study was the walking interview. I asked participants to pick a place that was significant for them, usually suggesting their neighborhood or a neighborhood that became central to their interviews over time. Cameron Duff (2010) demonstrates the way youths' affective responses make meaning of spaces and the ways

in which these spaces are then navigated by youth. For example, although Money Man currently lived in a different neighborhood than “6200”,<sup>3</sup> the neighborhood in which he spent his childhood, over time it became clear that “6200” was a significant force in his thinking on neighborhood and thus the location of our walking interview. To conduct the walking interviews, I carried a clipboard with my recorder connected to it by Velcro. This set-up allowed me to walk with the youth unburdened by my recorder and, in many of the neighborhoods, added a layer of safety for the youth so that they were not seen talking directly into a recorder. In some cases, I was able to have youth wear a back-up recorder around their neck while we walked. This back-up recorder aided in transcriptions where background noise was too overwhelming to hear a youth’s answer. However, in some of the neighborhoods, wearing a recorder around their neck would have potentially marked them as informants on neighborhood business. I left this decision up to each youth, making clear that it was not required to wear the recorder and they would receive their compensation either way.

### **Data Management**

Before we began the baseline interview, I had each youth choose a pseudonym with the caveat that it could not be the name of someone famous, like Beyoncé, or a copyrighted character, like Mighty Mouse. This pseudonym was used to manage all data files including interview transcriptions, GIS data, and field notes. Field notes, memos, and transcripts were entered into NVivo, a qualitative data management software that aided in the organization of themes and codes. GIS data was organized by pseudonym

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<sup>3</sup> This neighborhood has been disguised.

and date of the daily overview interview. This data was cleaned by me and prepped for entry into ArcGIS, a mapping software.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

**Qualitative analysis.** Data analysis was iterative and began at the onset of the study through the creation of theoretical notes and memos. Analysis was inductive, relying on the data to generate themes and theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and develop codes from the data set, which included interview transcripts, field notes, and memos. The six stages of thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), were followed as detailed in Table 4.

Table 4. Stages of Thematic Analysis

Stage of Thematic Analysis	Process
1. Familiarize self with data	Conducted all interviews, listened to recordings to clean transcripts and facilitate development of field notes and memos, self-transcription when possible
2. Generate initial codes	Iterative process, initially relying on analytic memos developed throughout the data collection process.
3. Searching for themes	Sorted coded data into potential thematic buckets
4. Reviewing themes	Further refining thematic buckets through the use of thematic maps (Figures 2-4)
5. Defining and naming themes	Refined the specifics of each theme, reviewing memos and coded data related to each developed theme
6. Writing findings	Extracted examples of coded data for the development of the findings chapters (Chapters Four, Five, and Six), related analysis back to initial research questions

To familiarize myself with my data, I conducted every interview, listened to the recording directly after to facilitate the development of field notes and memos, and in many cases transcribed the data myself. When interviews were transcribed by an external transcriptionist, I listened to the recording and cleaned the transcript. I also kept a field notebook in which I jotted initial thoughts and ideas about interviews and tracked the development of the study as it progressed. Codes were generated through an iterative process, initially relying heavily on analytic memos (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013; Saldana, 2015). Codes were then collated into a thematic bucket and were refined through the creation of thematic maps. These maps were further refined as themes were defined (Figures 2-4).

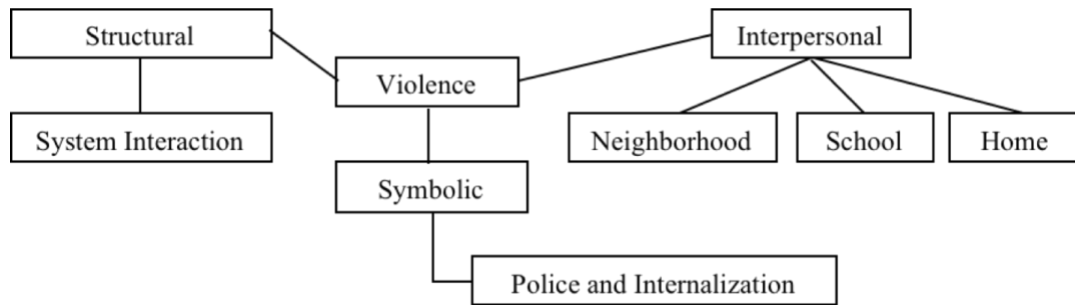


Figure 2. Thematic Map: Violence

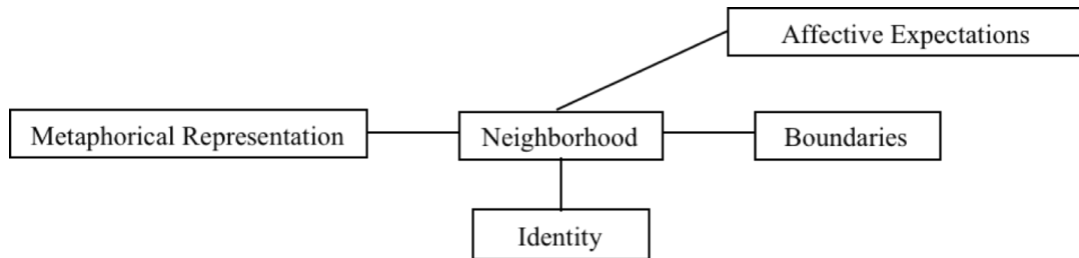


Figure 3. Thematic Map: Space

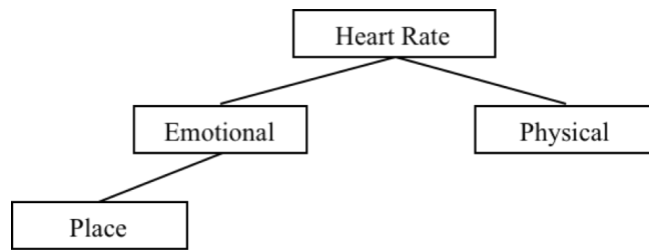


Figure 4. Thematic Map: Heart Rate

**Spatial analysis.** Spatial data was downloaded by 24-hour period from the PocketFinder secured website. Downloaded data was associated with the participants' chosen pseudonym and date of the download. Spatial data was cleaned such that only the following information was included: degrees latitude, degrees longitude, and date. This data was uploaded to ArcGIS, along with a base map of Philadelphia acquired from the open-source website, Open Data Philly. Latitude and longitude data were appended to the base map of Philadelphia in order to analyze the participants' activity paths. Activity routes were then blinded by rotating spatial markers (i.e. streets). This technique allowed for the integrity of the data to be maintained while still adhering to ethical standards of anonymity for the participants. These maps were created for four cases, selected based on the quality of the spatial data obtained (see Chapter Six).

### **Trustworthiness and Rigor**

Guba and Lincoln (1989) developed the concept of trustworthiness to represent a qualitative study that is done in an ethical and fair way, and the findings of which represent the experiences of the participants as closely as possible. In qualitative research, there are three primary threats to trustworthiness: reactivity, respondent bias, and researcher bias. Reactivity refers to the impact of the researcher's presence on the data collection processes (Padgett, 2017). Respondent bias reflects the possibility that

participants were not candid in their responses, that the broaching of sensitive topics may have led participants to conceal or provide misleading information (Padgett, 2017). In this study, prolonged engagement was used to combat both respondent bias and reactivity. On average, I spent a month with each participant, during which we developed a trusting relationship and the impact of my presence was diluted because of the prolonged time in the field. Researcher bias occurs when the personal opinions or preconceptions of the researcher inform the data collection processes and/or data analysis (Padgett, 2017). To combat this, I wrote reflexive memos interrogating my positionality throughout the data collection process, met with peers to debrief and process issues occurring in the field, and when possible conducted member check interviews with participants.

**Triangulation and rigor.** Triangulation refers to the use of two or more sources to “achieve a comprehensive picture of a fixed point of reference” (Padgett, 2017, p. 215). To enhance analytic rigor, this study relied primarily on two forms of triangulation as defined by Denzin (2010): methodological and data triangulation. Methodological triangulation is the use of multiple methods to study a topic, and for this study the various interview types and physiological methods were used for triangulation. Data triangulation is the use of two or more data sources, and for this study included the use of the various data sources – walking interviews, field observations, daily overview interviews, and family history interviews.

**Issues of validity and rigor.** Understanding that my own positionality influenced the way I interpreted the data and may also have influenced how the data were collected



(what participants tell me, how they act when I am around, and the like), I used memos throughout the study to continue to be aware of this. While the triangulation efforts described above will help to combat this bias, I also utilized member checks and debriefed with peers on some of the findings and analysis. I am a part of a qualitative research collective that meets weekly and is composed of doctoral students, post-doctoral fellows, and faculty from various disciplines.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: Foregrounding Violence: Seen and Unseen Markers of Violence**

Violence is primarily conceptualized as interpersonal; that is, residing solely in physical altercations between persons. However, as discussed in Chapters One and Two, violence can also take less tangible forms, enacted by state structures or through societal norms and expectations. These forms of violence can be just as harmful as interpersonal violence on young adults as they develop.

This chapter will foreground the many forms of violence experienced by participants. First, I illustrate the commonality of experiencing interpersonal violence across their contexts in their neighborhoods, homes, and schools. Then, I recount the participants' experiences with the police in response to this interpersonal violence. This chapter will conclude with a story focusing on Tasha's experience with violence in multiple contexts.

### **Commonality of Interpersonal Violence**

Interpersonal violence is the most common conceptualization of violence. Interpersonal violence is primarily physical, though it also encapsulates neglect and emotional abuse. Current understandings of interpersonal violence have been based on the World Health Organization's definition: "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a person or against a group or community that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation" (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002, p.5). This definition of interpersonal violence includes emotional abuse and other forms of violence that do not leave physical marks on the body.

As outlined in Chapter One, scholarship examining interpersonal violence is primarily quantitative and focuses on middle-school aged youth. This research also often focuses on violence in singular contexts (neighborhood, home, or school). Though qualitative work has primarily highlighted the experience of young males, the female participants in this study shared similar narratives of interpersonal violence to the males. Throughout the interviews, participants described witnessing, falling victim to, and perpetrating interpersonal violence in multiple forms and across multiple contexts, from sexual abuse to shootings in their neighborhoods.

**Neighborhood violence.** Accounts of neighborhood violence were present in all cases. Descriptions of neighborhood violence varied from firsthand accounts to hearsay within general descriptions of their neighborhoods. For many of the participants, violence within the neighborhood was a primary descriptor of their environment, with most depicting frequently witnessing and hearing shootings and fights. As discussed in the next chapter, these descriptions often factored into the youths' overall feelings about their neighborhoods as "bad" in comparison to other parts of the city.

Tasha, for example, used a personal account of violence to depict the prevalence of violence in her neighborhood and its impact on the residents:

*One of my friends, her mom, she got killed through her window. She was sitting.... I don't know. People who have they house the way they have it. She had her couch facing the window. Not facing the window. Back towards the window. Her TV was, like, in front of it. A bullet came through her house and shot her in her head. Yep. That's the neighborhood I live in. (Baseline Interview)*

Tasha used this incident, among others, to illustrate how the commonality of violence in her neighborhood meant that residents did not feel safe, not only while walking in the neighborhood, but also while in their homes. Other youth similarly described the

commonality of interpersonal violence in their neighborhoods When I asked Desmond about her neighborhood, she replied:

*Desmond: It's kinda crazy. It's been a lot of shooting, a lot of kids going missing, a lot of fights. I can't say I don't feel safe, sometimes I doubt myself like, 'Do I wanna live here or do I don't wanna live here?' But me, I feel safe anywhere I go. It's just what you do and how you handle the situation and what you get into. I'm not that type of person. I stay to myself. Wherever I'm going, I go straight there. I don't stop nowhere else, I go straight there. My neighborhood, it can be better if we all just stop the killing, the fights, and just come together... But, yeah, the violence needs to stop. Too many people die, sometimes in one day, sometimes the next day. It's just sad and stuff. (Baseline Interview)*

Conner had a similar response about his neighborhood:

*Conner: Most of people don't live here in Philly because a lot of things been happening... Majority done left because it was like violence that broke down. It was like . . . Then it be ambulances and cops coming through as well so there be a lot of stuff going on but it definitely do be crazy around this block. That why I always skip this block. I go probably up and down. I probably drive. I probably stay up there. (Walking Interview)*

For many, the violence in their neighborhoods felt inescapable. This feeling was best reflected in Kayla's feelings about her neighborhood:

*Kayla: It's a jail. I can say I don't feel safe there.*

Kalen: What makes it jail like?

*Kayla: I'm just in the house. I don't really go someplace. I'm just inside. Everything is closed. When I say it's a jail, I'm just in the one place. Everything is locked up. It's just closed. I'm so scared sometimes to just open the window. (Baseline Interview)*

Youth talked about keeping themselves safe from neighborhood violence in varying ways. Some youth, like Mouse, talked about staying inside, only leaving their houses when necessary for school or work. Here, Mouse describes the violence he sees in his neighborhood and how he keeps himself safe:

*Mouse: No, there's just a lot of shootings and burnt down houses.*

Kalen: Are you afraid of getting shot in your neighborhood?

*Mouse: Yeah.*

Kalen: How do you protect yourself from that?

*Mouse: By like staying inside and sleeping. Like every time when I go to the gym I just go catch the train. (Baseline)*

Similarly, Desmond described how she keeps herself safe:

*Desmond: I don't like it around here. Too much violence...Shooting. Fights. More of them shooting, the majority are shooting.*

Kalen: How do you keep yourself safe from that?

*Desmond: I stay in the house. (Walking Interview)*

Neighborhood violence was not relegated to the neighborhoods in which the youth lived. Many youth talked about violence as they traveled between neighborhoods.

Here, Alexandra offers a description of this:

*Alexandra: Yes. I do feel safer [than I do in Frankford]. I'm still scared to walk out here in the dark, because, you know, you're not safe everywhere, but it's safer. In Frankford, you just see a lot of people out there, they don't hide it. You can tell that they all trying to fight and do all this crazy stuff. I don't want to be caught in the middle of that. But, out here, I just walk down the street. The only thing is just cars passing by, so it's better. (Baseline Interview)*

In order to keep themselves safe as they traveled, some youth kept to themselves.

Here, Isabel responds to being asked how she keeps herself safe from the violence she sees as she travels:

*Isabel: I can't. I just walk. I just ignore them. I ignore other people. (Walking Interview)*

Others, like Boston, talked about traveling in groups, or connecting with people from those areas they knew:

*Boston: I travel in groups too. I started traveling in groups cuz that's how it is. If any of my friends goes to Frankford they always want to be together and if they're not together they need just one other person, if there's not one more person, go home. (Daily Overview 2)*

Youth described witnessing violence first-hand in their neighborhoods and as they traveled to other areas in the city, and the complications of reporting shootings to authorities. Here, Money Man explains what it is like to witness a shooting firsthand:

*Money Man: Seeing somebody get shot? Crazy, 'cause you right there. You basically a witness. If you don't report it, you can get in a lot of trouble for that, so I try to stay out the mix, but I seen somebody get shot a couple times.*

Kalen: Did you have to report it?

*Money Man: Naw, I ain't report nothing. I'd get killed for that. (Daily Overview 3)*

Isabel reported being surprised to witness a shootout in her neighborhood.

Although she said she knew this type of violence was prevalent, she never thought she would witness it firsthand:

*Isabel: It happened on that block, but I mean...I'm not even sure what happened, all I kept hearing is the shoots, so. I just kept walking.*

Kalen: What was that like?

*Isabel: I was surprised, like I've never been...I never heard gun shots so loud. I didn't know what to do so I just kept walking. (Baseline Interview)*

Boston described witnessing shootings while traveling through a different neighborhood:

*Boston: I saw somebody get shot earlier this year at the terminal. That was once, it was one time I saw somebody get shot.*

Kalen: Which terminal?

*Boston: Frankford. It was across from where I was sitting.*

Kalen: What was that like?

*Boston: I didn't know what was going on. I just remember my one friend that lives like down Kensington and something, all I heard was like (hits table repeatedly with hands), he was running. (laughs) So I saw he was running so I got up and I ran too. And I saw like the shells fly out the gun and all that and seeing the flash. It was kind of...And I saw the guy. The guy, he fell, of course he was down. It was random because I'm pretty sure they were just talking at first and everyone thought they were all cool, and then he just started shooting. So, it was the first time. Gotta get used to it though. So probably, I saw people fighting a few times, so it's a few times. (Baseline Interview)*

Some of the youth described losing friends and family to neighborhood violence, and how this sense of loss has impacted their view of life in their neighborhoods, as both Conner and Kareem exemplify. Here Conner explains what it feels like to lose someone to gun violence:

*Conner: I mean nobody doesn't really say anything about it. It's kind of like . . . It's a deep emotional ride people go through. It's like once you hear about . . . I mean . . . Then people are kind of used to it because I mean the majority of us, people of color, they're like used to something like that happening. It's kind of like we're not worried about that much.*

Kalen: Because you're used to it?

*Conner: Yeah. It's like . . . right at the time if you hear about it so many times that's when half of the time you don't really buy at all or really just look at it no more. You just try figure out how can you make it better or just not do nothing at all. (Walking Interview)*

*Kareem: Yeah I heard people telling me such and such got shot because of this situation. Such and such just got stabbed. Or such and such just went to jail for this amount of time. Then they be hype about it like, 'Oh yeah he just got out of jail this, this and that.' It's a certain rank. They be ranking up because they went to jail because of what they did. They stabbed somebody. 'Oh yeah I killed somebody for this, this and that.' 'Yeah I'm doing this time for this.' They'll turn around and think it's something good so when they get out of jail they start bragging about it like, 'I went jail for this, this and that.' They think it's a rank. I don't know why it's like that. That's basically it though.*

Kalen: How does it feel when you hear about someone your age being killed?

*Kareem: It makes me think to stay out the way. Somebody just told me yesterday, this guy that works at the funeral home, he said, 'Every week he buries a young kid from getting killed.' Because ain't nothing for these young kids out here to do. They got to stay doing something. You what I'm saying? Him telling me that he buried 18 year-old, 17, 16 year-olds every week that can be me. Or that can be somebody I know. You know what I mean? (Baseline Interview)*

At the same time, Kareem attributed these deaths to individual behavior:

*Kareem: Just the kids make it (the neighborhood) bad, them not knowing manners period. They just do whatever they want. Say whatever they want to anybody. Once they do that, or do whatever they want to anybody, they'll come back. That's why a lot of young kids like us are dying fast because some of us wasn't taught. You know what I mean? What to say or how to act towards people. That's why people getting killed. (Baseline Interview)*

**Violence at home.** Female participants talked about violence occurring within their homes, both in their familial homes and within state-sanctioned placements. Here, interpersonal violence took the form of emotional abuse within families, sexual abuse, and intimate partner violence.

Tasha described witnessing her mother's experience with abuse from multiple partners throughout her childhood. Here, she describes a formative memory:

*Tasha: They say, you keep getting abused, it'll be that day where that person almost kill you. And he almost killed her. If I wasn't there, she would have been out the window. She was pregnant with my little sister, and she had his daughter on her hip. He didn't care. He was about to knock all of them out the window. I saved my little sister. I put her down on the floor, me and her go in the room. That's what I'm saying: I had to defend her. I hit him upside the head with a glass bottle. It broke on his head. That's why he stopped. It was the last that he ever abused her, the last day he ever came back. I made sure that the police was called and my family was called. I made sure that glass bottle was in his head, so he wouldn't be able to get up.*

Kalen: How did that feel for you?

*Tasha: At the time, I was young. You don't really think about it. I was just like, "I saved my mom." That's how I felt.*

Kalen: How old were you?



*Tasha: About nine. Yeah, I just felt like I saved my mom. That's how any child would feel. If their mom is getting abused to the point where she look like she lifeless. (Baseline Interview)*

In addition to witnessing intimate partner violence, Tasha, along with Desmond and Kalia, were victims of sexual abuse during their early lives. Here, Desmond talks about the impact this abuse had on her:

*Desmond: She went to court when she found out I got molested. Why did that have to happen to me? Why couldn't it happen to nobody else? But, it changed my life. It changed my life so much. In so many ways. It made me judgmental. I don't like dark skinned people, but having God is like, he took that away. I love all people. I didn't like dark skinned people. I hated them.*

Kalen: Is your uncle dark skinned?

*Desmond: Well, I got molested three times in my life. One by my brother's godfather. One by my own uncle. And when I was in placement, some man used to box me in the shower and he used to touch me. It destroyed me when I got older. Cuz it hitted me. I used to have flash back and stuff.*

Kalen: Do you still have flash backs?

*Desmond: No. Thanks to God.*

Kalen: Were all of them dark skinned?

*Desmond: He damaged me the most. He did things that he should never do and that went on for years. I was sick and tired of it and I just screamed at the top of the step one day, I was angry. He did it to so many people. I don't know why they let him out. He kept doing the same thing. I don't know why they let him out. Court system is so fucked up.*

Kalen: Is this the guy that was in your placement?

*Desmond: Mm-hmm (negative). My brother's god father.*

Kalen: He went through the courts multiple times for this?

*Desmond: Mm-hmm (affirmative).*

Kalen: When you say it changed you, how did it change you?

*Desmond: It made me smarter. It made me love myself more and not give myself to a lot of people that don't deserve me. It made me see the world different. How this world is crazy and crazy people in it. It just humbled me. It just changed my whole life. It inspired me. It did a lot of things to me. A lot. So much. One day, when I'm ready, I'm going to do a testimony in church. I want to. I want that when I'm ready. (Family History Interview)*

Tasha was victimized by her cousin when she was 7 years-old. Unlike Desmond, who was able to disclose her experience to her mother, Tasha did not feel as though she had anyone to talk to about her abuse at the time.

Kalen: How old was your cousin?

*Tasha: He was, like, 20 something. I was, like, 8, 7. One of those. So yeah, that's what a lot of things happened from. And I always told her it was her fault. It is her fault. It was her fault. 7 years old, what could I do? She was outside partying and having fun while I was getting touched. So yeah, I feel like that was her fault. I do.*

Kalen: Did she ever report that?

*Tasha: No, because I didn't tell her until years later. The only reason why I didn't because . . . I don't know why I didn't, but I just didn't. I didn't want to talk to her about it. I felt like she didn't care. Why tell somebody something they don't care? And my dad was in and out of prison, so there was really nobody I could talk to. I mean, my grand mom, my dad mom, she's here now. But back then, she wasn't really there. I had nobody to talk to, really. (Baseline Interview)*

Kalia also experienced sexual abuse, but did not reveal any information about the incident beyond acknowledging that it happened:

Kalen: Did anyone ever touch or fondle you in a sexual way, or have you touch their body in a sexual way?

*Kalia: Yes.*

Kalen: Did anyone attempt to have or actually have any type of sexual intercourse with you?

*Kalia: No. Thank god. (Baseline Interview)*

Kalia and Isabel, did, however, discuss the emotional abuse they and their siblings endured from her mother, as well as how witnessing their parents fight impacted her and her siblings. During the walking interview, Kalia spoke about her siblings having anger issues, here she responds to probing around that:

Kalen: Where do you think those [your siblings' anger issues] come from?

*Kalia: My brother always had them growing up, like growing up he always had problems. I don't know why... But Brianna, I think she got them because of the whole separation and divorce thing, like I think she just developed them. And like my parents, growing up, they were constantly fighting, arguing with each other, throwing stuff.*

Kalen: Do you think that impacted you and your siblings?

*Kalia: Yeah, definitely. Like, all of us have some type of psychological problem.*

Kalen: Like what?

*Kalia: Well, not everyone is diagnosed with something, but we all definitely all do. Like all of us went through depression, I know that definitely. So Ozzy, he's always had ADHD. And Briana has that too. So they have those issues. Maria, she had a lot. She definitely went through depression. Freshman year, my mom and her had a lot of issues so she would starve herself. So she lost a lot of weight. Like she would starve herself and even now she has like body image issues, she still has them now. Like she's just insecure and all that kind of stuff. And a lot of that came from my mom actually. Cuz my mom is really a judgmental person and she's really verbally abusive. So that same thing affected me too, but like not as bad. She went to extremes about it, I just like took it in and felt sad about it and then I just felt sad about it, like that's it. I didn't do nothing about it.*

Kalen: What kind of things would your mom say?

*Kalia: Like she's just.... she would always criticize us about what we wore or how we acted, or anything like that. And it never seemed like anything we did was good enough for her. And also, she would call us and be like "You're trash" or "You're just like your father". She's like that. She's very verbally abusive.*

Kalen: Is she still that way?

*Kalia: Yes, she's still like that. Not as often as she was but she's still like that. Or she'll be like "You're worthless, you're not gonna do nothing with your life". But,*

*Rosie, right now...Rosie, even still now she struggles a lot with depression.  
(Walking Interview)*

Isabel, Kalia's sister, also addressed the impact of their parents' divorce on their family:

Kalen: Do you think their split has impacted you and your siblings?

*Isabel: Yeah.*

Kalen: How?

*Isabel: A lot. My parents . . . My siblings all changed. We all changed.*

Kalen: How do you think you changed?

*Isabel: I don't know. I have to be different than somebody that knew me before and after. I did go through stuff.*

Kalen: How do you think your siblings changed?

*Isabel: I don't know. They just act different. My sister, she's always mad all the time. She gives everybody attitude. She acts like she don't care about nothing. She gives, maybe three people, her actual attention and be kind to them. Everybody else is just like F them. She don't care. (Walking Interview)*

Alexandra also experienced emotional abuse while living with her father in California when she was eleven-years-old. She eventually ran away to come back to Pennsylvania and live with her mother:

Kalen: What was it like, to live with your dad?

*Alexandra: It was bad, you know? At that point, he wasn't meant for parenting. He was very strict, you know. Me, as a girl, I don't think he knew how to raise a girl, at that point. I was better off with my mom. He was just going hard on me, like he would on a boy. I didn't like it. We had a lot of rules, we couldn't go . . . We had to ask to go in the refrigerator for water. It was a lot of stuff like that. Like we would get in trouble, we couldn't eat snacks. It was bad. Me as a child, you know, I loved snacks. I loved doing all of this stuff. When I wasn't allowed to do it, it was bad, so I wanted to leave. I wanted to come to my mom. When I finally did, it was good. (Baseline Interview)*

**Violence in schools.** Youth reported violence in their schools as well as the steps schools took to mitigate this violence. None of the youth talked about being directly

victimized by interpersonal violence in schools, however some described perpetrating violence on school grounds. Here, Money Man describes why he was expelled from his high school:

*Money Man: I had got kicked out for a situation that I had. I got into a bad fight and I guess I had beat him so bad when I was fighting him. 'Cause when I'm angry, I really start just throwing hands. That's when I caught him bad, but then again, he caught me bad, so I guess I put him in the hospital... He just kept playing too much. He kept swinging on me. I just got tired of it 'cause I guess he . . . Put it like this, he was a playful person. He like to swing on everybody and all that, but sometimes people don't want to be playing. I really had a bad day at school already because my teacher already had made me mad, and he just wanna keep playing, so I blacked out and just started punching on him. I ain't mean for it to go that far, but he just kept playing too much.*

Kalen: What happened after that?

*Money Man: The next day he had ratted on me. Everybody in the school was cool with me so they was tryna touch him, so we had a meeting to squash it and all that, so my whole thing was I was gon' beat him up again after school, but I said I'm just gonna calm down, chill. Next thing you know my cousin hit on him. My cousin got suspended for it. A day after my cousin came back, cause my cousin had got five days for it, I had got suspended because someone had showed the principal the video and he kicked me out.*

Kalen: How did you feel about that?

*Money Man: I was angry because like I felt as though even though it was both of our fault, why did I have to get kicked out? 'Cause he transferred schools. He just kept playing too much. (Baseline Interview)*

After this incident, Money Man had tried to transfer schools, but he would have had to start in the ninth grade instead of picking up in the eleventh grade. He decided to pursue his GED instead.

Other participants talked about the difference they saw between the schools they attended versus other schools in the neighborhood. Here, Kalia describes the difference between her charter school and the neighborhood's public school:

Kalen: Is your school low key?

*Kalia: I guess you could say that, yeah I guess you could say that. I mean, there be fights but not like a lot a lot a lot like the public school.*

Kalen: Does the public school have a lot of fighting?

*Kalia: Yeah, definitely. You know they're trying to close it down? And I was like where are all the students going to go? You know how many students go to that school? That's a neighborhood school for so many people. You can't just take it. You can't just like close it, like where are all the students gonna go? They're gonna be packed into a bunch of different schools. It's just ridiculous.*

Kalen: Is that why you didn't go to the public school?

*Kalia: Oh, I was definitely not going to there, nope. It's too ratchet there. But I mean my school, I guess you could say its pretty low key. Sometimes there is fights and they're ridiculous fights, but for the most part we stay out the mix. But there is like a rivalry with the public school. Every time the public school comes to our let out, there are cops, there are. It's just a whole big thing because like two years back, no like three years back matter of fact, a lot of students from the public school came and jumped student from our school, like random. They didn't even know them and they just jumped them. And so like, the public school students aren't allowed there. And even for sports, when we play them like no one else, no students can come or nothing. They just like play the game, and it be like intense too, it be intense because nobody likes each other, they be ready to fight all the time. (Daily Overview 2)*

Mouse attended AB High School and then transferred to CD High School. While at AB, he was able to take piano lessons and enjoyed their athletic facilities. When we discussed CD High School, he said he did not spend any extra time there, and tried to minimize his time in the neighborhood surrounding the school. Here, Mouse describes how metal detectors signify “bad” schools:

Kalen: A quiet school. Do you have metal detectors at your school?

*Mouse: Yeah.*

Kalen: Do you have to go through them every day?

*Mouse: Mm-hmm (affirmative).*

Kalen: What's that like?

*Mouse: It's stupid.*

Kalen: Why do you think it's stupid?

*Mouse: Because, I don't know, because at the same time, I think it's smart though. Yeah, at the same time, I think it's smart.*

Kalen: Why is it smart and stupid at the same time?

*Mouse: Because if it's smart, so kids won't bring any guns or knives or stuff. And the stupid is I don't see it in a nice school.*

Kalen: So you don't think your school is nice?

*Mouse: No, I think it's a nice school, but at the same time it be a little bit of like the girls fighting each other.*

Kalen: Would you say that AB High School is a nice school?

*Mouse: Yeah, 'cuz that school didn't have no metal detectors.*

Kalen: Why do you think CD has metal detectors, but AB doesn't?

*Mouse: It's 'cuz our school's a bad school, and AB is a good school.*

Kalen: What makes a school a good school?

*Mouse: Good teachers, a good principal.*

Kalen: What makes a school a bad school?

*Mouse: Bad teachers, because the teachers at my school, all they do is just be on their phones and computers and don't teach us at all. (Daily Overview 4)*

Kareem stopped traditional schooling in the tenth grade due to disruptions from moving. His mother homeschooled him until he was accepted into the Job Corps. He was dismissed and began working on his GED to “get back on track”. Here he describes the violent incident that led to his dismissal from the Job Corps:

Kalen: How did you learn to weld?

*Kareem: I was actually going to Job Corps. before I came out here. I got into a little situation and they terminated me. Actually they sent me back to Philadelphia. I was in the south. I was going for welding. Hands on training and stuff like that. They taught me how to weld. I was doing forklift driving. I was still studying for my CDL's but it was the people that was there was getting in my way. I really couldn't really focus like I really wanted to. I got into a situation. They sent me back the same day. They told me the only way I can come back is next year.*

Kalen: How were they getting in your way?

*Kareem: It's the students. It was gang members and stuff like that. Everybody that came to the Job Corp Center was basically kids that didn't have anything or have anything set for their lives. It was everything that they knew in the streets, they brought to Job Corp. It was just like, they was just in the way. It was a lot of them. I got in trouble.*

Kalen: It sounds like that was frustrating for you.

*Kareem: It was. On my way back I was kind of regretting. I was kind of really thinking it wasn't worth it. It wasn't worth fighting, it wasn't worth doing what I did. You know what I mean? To get terminated. I was kind of feeling bad about it. I thought that was the end of everything. I thought I messed up everything. Until I met this Center and basically are gonna help me get my GED and stuff. (Baseline Interview)*

At the same time, Kayla described bullying she experienced at the GED center and its impact on her outlook of the program:

Kalen: Let's see, I talked to you yesterday around 11, right? Alright, so it looks like you had a slight bump, went up to 104, around 1 o'clock?

*Kayla: Yesterday I was crying Ms. Kalen.*

Kalen: Why were you crying?

*Kayla: Because of that girl, I'm the tall one, Brandy, she's sitting at the system, in front. She's helping, she got to work there. Even during our lunch time, I decided to sit alone because they, how can I say, she so mean to me. She's just like, she's very different to me since her cousin came.*

Kalen: She's been mean to you since her cousin came?

*Kayla: She's just very, how can I say, she's, saying words towards me. How can I, if I talk in my language and then they'll be laughing or tell me to stop talking or*



*keep it like . . . how can I say not talk that loud or while they are watching? How can I say, while they are talking loud. When I went in before two o'clock Miss Nancy wanted me to tell what's wrong. I just went, "No I don't want to talk to anyone, that's okay."*

Kalen: How was Brandy before her cousin came?

*Kayla: She was nice to me and we usually like, okay when she came I started talking with her. I took her to the classes and showed her the different classes, but then her cousin came and the other girl came. She's just different towards me, she's, you know? So I'm just, also keeping my distance and not sitting next to them.*

Kalen: How are you feeling about the program?

*Kayla: Before? I was always happy to go to a program but you know Miss Kalen, if you even sometimes, English is not my mother tongue. So sometimes I can make mistakes, sometimes you maybe, how can I say? You will not really understand me but you'll know what I really want to say, or . . . you get me. So instead of just helping me, you and then they'll be saying, "No, it's like that." And then they will start laughing, or what did she say? Or they . . . (Daily Overview 4)*

## **Police Interactions and Youth**

Narratives of interpersonal violence were interspersed with stories of failure by state structures and institutions to respond to this violence. These narratives highlight the ways in which symbolic, structural, and interpersonal violence work on a continuum through which they perpetuate and reinforce each other. Within the context of the youth in this study, the failure of one system, designed to address forms of interpersonal violence, stood out: the justice system.

Interactions with the police were the main referent for the justice system in this study. This is not surprising, given that the police are in many ways the face of the justice system. Many of the youth spoke to a tension wherein their neighborhoods felt like they were over-surveilled by the police, while at the same time feeling as though the police don't come when they are needed (*i.e.* when there is a shooting, a fight, or a crime). This

tension led youth to feel like the police did not care about their neighborhood, and by extension them:

Kalen: I'm wondering do you think that police keep your neighborhoods safer?

*Isabel: No. They don't care.*

Kalen: They don't care about your neighborhood?

*Isabel: No. They show up when they're ready to show up. They only show up when they hear guns. If it's something else, if it's a fight or something, they won't come until after the fight's done. Somebody is already in the ambulance. That's why the fire people are the first ones on site.*

Kalen: Would you call the police if something happened?

*Isabel: I mean, yeah, if I had to. Most of the time people just call people.*

Kalen: Why do you think that is?

*Isabel: Obviously, whoever you're calling is, you know they're going to come help you. Whereas the police, they only get paid, they don't do it out of the kindness of their hearts, because they care. They just do it because they get paid.*

Kalen: They don't always come?

*Isabel: No. You know how many time we have called the police and police never showed up until 2:00 in the morning? And the call would be at 9:00 at night.  
(Walking Interview)*

Kalen: Are they in your neighborhood a lot?

*Future: What, the cops? Mm-hmm (affirmative) I live right down the street from the 18th District. They on 55th and Pine, I live on 54th.*

Kalen: Do you think they make your neighborhood safer?

*Future: No.*

Kalen: Why not?

*Future: They don't do nothing. They useless basically.*

Kalen: What do you mean they don't do anything?

*Future: All right, so say if somebody call them they don't arrive 'til 30 minutes to an hour later. You better off just taking yourself to the hospital if something ever happen or running away.*

Kalen: Why do you think they take so long to respond?

*Future: I don't know. It be us.*

Kalen: Do you think they're quicker to respond to other people?

*Future: I don't know. I don't call them. All I know is they slow. If they do, they do. That's not my fault, that's their fault. (Daily Overview 3)*

Kalen: What do you think about cops in your neighborhood?

*Desmond: I think instead of them trying to help us out, they trying more to put black people in jail. But, it's like . . . but when it's shooting, like, it's like . . . when you call the cops and it's not major, major . . . it can escalate into a major situation. They won't do nothing if it didn't happen. But, if it happened and somebody's been killed and you're already talking like, "This person is threatening me . . . duh, duh, duh." (Walking Interview)*

Kalen: Is that the first time you heard a gunshot in your neighborhood?

*Kayla: It was the first time.*

Kalen: Did someone die?

*Kayla: Apparently yes, he died. I think there were like . . . I think there were busy with drug dealing stuff. He just came out of the shop. One of the managers came out of the shop and then the other one was in the car. He drove with his car and then he the other moment, he just shot the one that was coming out of the shop and he died on the spot.*

Kalen: It took the cops a lot time to come?

*Kayla: Yes, the cops, even the ambulance. They took their time to come.*

Kalen: How long did it take?

*Kayla: It was long. About ten minutes. (Baseline Interview)*

Kalen: Do you think police make your neighborhood safer?

*Kalia: Yeah. They stop a lot of things that shouldn't be happening but they also take things to more extreme measures for certain things. Like, you know, we're in a neighborhood where there's kids around all the time, and they help keep people that are on the street away from kids. They help keep kids safe, they help keep a lot of people safe, but there's also like certain situations where maybe...maybe there's like a drug bust or something but they give that person like 10 years in jail just for having a little something. I don't know, I just feel like certain things they take to extreme measures. And also, they do make my neighborhood safer, but I feel like certain areas aren't a priority to them. Like you know, you can call the cops and they'll come like three hours later, but if it was in a white neighborhood...it's like that (snaps her fingers) it's like that they're there.*

Kalen: Why do you feel like certain areas aren't a priority for them?

*Kalia: Cuz I feel like, not that they don't care, but that they're like "oh, they're used to it, this happens all the time, da da da duh, it'll probably die out" or whatever it may be. But people...there are people that really be in danger and they just be like pushing it to the side like it's nothing.*

Kalen: And you think its different in white neighborhoods?

*Kalia: Yeah, cuz I think like....Maybe they think that if white people call the cops, like OH MY GOD it's a big issue, but like if we call the cops it's like "oh you know, it's their everyday lives".*

Kalen: They think you're more tolerant of things?

*Kalia: Yeah, or like maybe they think if something bad happening it's our fault, or like we caused it. So, we just kind of half to deal with it. (Member Check Interview)*

Kalen: Do people talk to the cops about stuff like shootings?

*Conner: No. No. Nobody don't. I think one of the reason why . . . I mean like . . . Because they got the whole thing around like people snitching and stuff like that. That ain't right. Then somebody else saw them and stuff like that.*

Kalen: Do they try to take care of it themselves?

*Conner: I mean that goes into another situation. I mean that's like so many situations I can't really explain. I mean they would rather pull out a camera out just to watch it happen rather than pick up the phone and be like, "Hey . . . uh."*

Kalen: How do you feel about that?

*Conner: I don't really feel any type of way with it and stuff like that. I mean because most people that I know they've been through that and stuff like that. Then we're all going to have than have a situation like that go down because there was somebody that did actually told the cops. I'm guessing they went after him or something like that but then we found out he moved out of Philly not long after before the incident happened. (Walking Interview)*

Kalen: You said the first time we talked you said that you don't feel like you ever get treated differently because of your race or ethnicity? Is that true with cops too?

*Kareem: I just got pulled over from a cop. And they was talking like I was a piece of shit. I wasn't even being disrespectful to them. I was just getting a cigarette, but it was late and they was looking for somebody out there. Pulled me and my mans over. Me and my friend. They said something. And he said some disrespectful stuff. I ain't even gonna repeat it. But he just said some disrespectful stuff. Then my friend started arguing back with him. But it was four white cops. And my friend start arguing back, like a dummy. And then it started escalating from there. But I just kept my mouth closed. Then they brung up some stuff that happened in Virginia. They said they seen something on my background. They was like, " what you was doing in Virginia Kareem?" I was like, " What are you talking about?"*

Kalen: They ran your name?

*Kareem: Yeah, they ran my name. And said, " what you was doing in Virginia Kareem?" I'm like I wasn't do nothing. I don't even have no background.*

Kalen: Why did they run your name?

*Kareem: They ran my name because they thought we was the suspect that was in that area at the time. They was wondering. I was just coming from the Chinese store getting a cigarette. (Walking Interview)*

Kalen: What do you mean?

*Money Man: The county is different from Philly. They have way more cops because you know the county is sweet. It's full of like. . . you know how we all mostly everybody be in Philly? People from Philly travel to the county just to tip on people. They wanna keep the county safe because that's they county so more cops down there.*

Kalen: Mm-hmm (affirmative) So there's more cops around 69th street?

*Money Man: Around 69th street, Darby, don't matter where you at. You catchin it.*

Kalen: Do they interact with you differently?

*Money Man: Yeah they treat you better than Philly cops though.*

Kalen: They treat you better than Philly?

*Money Man: Mm-hmm (affirmative) They don't do all that hitting and slamming you.*

Kalen: Have you had bad interactions with Philly cops?

*Money Man: One time, he choke slammed me.*

Kalen: Choke slammed you? Like slammed you by your neck?

*Money Man: Yeah. Grabbed me up, picked me up and threw me.*

Kalen: Really?

*Money Man: Yeah I was rumbling him, my girl was crying like no, no hold my hand.*

Kalen: What happened?

*Money Man: Cuz they they pulled us over because my man [his friend] right he was walking - chilling just sitting on the step and like gotta go, so we all get up. My man looked at me in his eyes and said alright. Cops said why you looking at me like that so he said go home man finish your job. So the cop, actually the cop was messing with us, so they kept going back and forth. He called for backup, so he let my mans say you know what now we not going nowhere. I stood beside him like I'm not moving so he like y'all better move or I'mma make y'all move. My man was like alright so he told his partner to grab my man and grabbed me and picked me up and choke slammed me. I was about to black out I'm trynna tell you. I said chill. So my girl grabbed my hand. I said chill. I was going down on him.*

Kalen: Is that the only time you've had a bad interaction with cops.

*Money Man: For real. No, that's not it. Um the first time I had got locked up because I was with some people and they did something negative and we was down 36th and Lancaster. And you know that little bank, you know that, but it's like a building. So we used to have like a little group thing in there. After that we left, they took somebody phone and when he went to get the phone he said I'll take*

*cash instead, told the boy to take out some bread. Boy took out 60. . . gave it to us. So we start running. We get to at least like, at least like, maybe like 40<sup>th</sup> & Walnut and I get picked up. I gave myself up as the person who took the bread. I aint get none of that. (Daily Overview 3)*

Kalen: Okay. We talked a little bit about police before. Do you think they make neighborhoods safer?

*Tasha: Imma be honest, some can make them safe and some can make them worse if you get what I'm saying. Some police officers make neighborhoods safe and some police officers make neighborhoods worse. I mean, beefing and stuff like that.*

Kalen: When you say beefing you mean it in terms of there's a drama between them.

*Tasha: Yeah. Some police officers actually egg that on. Meaning if it was beef going on . . . I don't know. One day my friend, he didn't go to school. He was skipping school because people from a different neighborhood was going to his school his friends wasn't there. They was getting suspended. They was bad so he was the only one that was going to school. One day he got jumped so he started skipping school and the cops picked him up. This was a couple years ago. He tried to explain to them what was going on then they dropped him off at a school that wasn't even his. You know sometimes they do that, right? That was the other side that they was beefing with and he got hurt really bad. Really, really, really bad. He was trying to tell them, "This is not my side. We going to war." They just like, "I don't give a F." He was telling us the story. "I don't care . . ." He was hurt really really bad. Real bad. They almost killed him. It was bad but it was because of the police officers because he tried to explain to them what was going on. They dropped him off at any school and he was like, "This is even worse than my school. This the other side that I'm beefing with." They didn't care. In a way I think maybe if it was they kid they would listen. You get what I'm saying? (Walking Interview)*

Similarly, Mouse talked about feeling as though the police in his neighborhood added to the violence that was already present:

Kalen: Do you feel safer around police?

*Mouse: Now that, I don't know, because I hardly go near 'em.*

Kalen: Do you avoid them.

*Mouse: Yeah, I avoid them, all of the drama people.*

Kalen: The police are drama people?

*Mouse: Yeah, it like, they're somewhat drama people.*

Kalen: What makes the police drama people?

*Mouse: Because, I be seein' police fighting people a lot.*

Kalen: You see them fighting people a lot?

*Mouse: Yeah.*

Kalen: Why do the police fight people.

*Mouse: I don't even know. I guess it's like the crimes, the beef they have with us.*

Kalen: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Do you see them fight people in your neighborhood a lot?

*Mouse: No, it be in a parts of a, in the bad park over there, though.*

Kalen: What are they usually fighting over?

*Mouse: I don't know. It be like, I be like playin' ball, and out of nowhere, there be like all these cops, chasin' after people.*

Kalen: They're chasing people through the park?

*Mouse: Yeah, and then they get caught in the park too and then they just beat the people down.*

Kalen: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- How do you feel about that?

*Mouse: I just feelin' like it is not right, or, it's not good.*

Kalen: What's not good about it?

*Mouse: It's cause they fightin' people.*

Kalen: Do you think that the police, should fight people?

*Mouse: No.*

Kalen: So, how do you think the police should react in a situation like that?



*Mouse: Like, to just arrest the guy. (Member Check Interview)*

Some of the male participants talked about the reasons they believed police brutality happened:

*Money Man: So like they treat white people with utmost respect, but they treat us with respect too but then again, we show disrespect and that's when they start showing disrespect back. See everybody pray to be treated the same because when a cop pull over a white person, he gon show all respect. He might get locked up because if he says something but he shows respect so he gon help him out for showing respect. They try and work with us. We arguing with the cop. They don't like this so they just gon send you right up. They won't help with nothing. (Daily Overview 3)*

*Future: Us, black people. We do that shit. White people, they do that shit, but they get to a certain point, they are like, 'Let me stop.' We catch charges differently. White people learn they lesson; but we don't know how to learn lessons so they gotta beat us. (Daily Overview 2)*

*Kareem: No. I mean, if you wasn't doing nothing. If you was a criminal, yeah. If you was a criminal, then they probably treat in a certain way. But since almost every black person be getting into almost everything. They think we all criminals. I can't blame them though. (Walking Interview)*

*Boston: I used to listen to, I forgot what it's called, when you would call the police and a lady would answer the phone – it's always a lady, with the same exact voice, for years, and she says how can I help you. You would say I found a dead body. They say white or black. Before they ask the gender they say white or black. I don't know why they did that. They didn't even include Hispanic or anything else, they said white or black. So it's white or minority. They won't shoot the rich or they won't shoot the privileged black kids that's for sure because they're privileged so they won't shoot them. (Member Check Interview)*

## **Symbolic, Structural, and Physical Violence: Intersecting Forms of Violence in the Everyday**

**Tasha's story.** From the start of my field work at the GED center, it was clear that Tasha's presence was palpable - her laughter often echoed through the classrooms and the teachers would light up when she came through the halls. During our interviews, Tasha opened up about the multitudes of violence she had witnessed in various contexts throughout her life. She was born in North Philly but moved to South Philly when she entered middle school. Though both neighborhoods were important to her, she described them very differently: North Philly was where she went when she "wanted to get away from her problems", its memories were encapsulated in family get-togethers from her youth; South Philly was "where it all went down", where she saved her mother, was kicked out of school, and caught a charge. At present, she lived in West Philadelphia with her current partner's parents and her children. His parents are "functional addicts", and though she appreciates their generosity, she is fearful of exposing her children to drugs so early in their development.

Her father was in and out of jail for low-level drug offenses throughout her life. She was raised by her mother, an alcoholic who frequently disappeared for weeks while binging. She grew up witnessing her mother being physically and verbally victimized by a series of partners. As discussed above, her twenty-year-old male cousin moved into their home and almost immediately began molesting her. It was not long before he began to rape her, using food as bribery since food was not always available at her house. In the present day, Tasha struggles with obesity, having been told by her doctor that carrying

extra weight is causing her hypertension and pre-diabetes. Her eating is emotion driven, and she spoke about ignoring her doctor's dietary guidance when she was feeling stressed or overwhelmed. At the same time, she barely left her neighborhood as any small amount of activity would increase her heart rate and blood pressure, causing a hypertension headache.

As described in the section above, when Tasha was nine-years-old, she stopped her mother's partner from almost killing her pregnant mother and younger sister by pushing them out a fifth story window. She described how this incident shaped her:

"I did feel good in that moment because I'm like, 'I saved my mom. I'm a hero.' When I started getting older, it was like, 'Wow. That's abuse.' I was like, 'Why do you allow that? Why?' That's something that somebody allow. You can't allow yourself to get abused and abused and abused, and then used and abused. It made me a different person than I think I would have been if I never witnessed my mom get abused. I think I probably would have been a different child, or a different adult. Being as though I watched my mom get abused, it was like . . . What's that word? Defensive. Anything somebody said, because I know how it was when Mom got abused. That was always in the back of my mind. Even if I was fighting a girl or boy, it was like, 'I'm not letting this person overpower me.' That's how I was. I would never let somebody overpower me. I would never let somebody beat me."

Throughout her childhood, Tasha felt like she had no one to talk to about the violence she was witnessing at home and by which she was being directly victimized. She became depressed and anxious, unable to focus at school. She would sometimes have

long absences in elementary and middle school, a result of taking care of her mother after a night of bingeing or for injuries from the abuse, or because she was in pain from the sexual abuse at the hands of her cousin. Her teachers viewed her as disengaged, labeling her as a “delinquent student who did not care about education”. Tasha was kicked out of South Philadelphia High School in the ninth grade for behavior, including truancy and cursing at her teachers. Tasha described her teachers at South Philadelphia High School as not caring about the students and maintained that they, in fact, often instigated cursing by saying things like “Sit the fuck down”. She felt she gave them the same respect they showed her.

When she was 15, she was caught trespassing in a home with her boyfriend at the time. Tasha walked him to what she thought was his house, but once they were inside he stole her phone and locked himself in the basement. As she went to leave the house, three police officers came in - two blue shirts (patrol) and a captain. They had guns in her face, demanding she get on the ground while they pulled her boyfriend from the basement. She was charged with robbery, burglary, perjury, and breaking and entering. Once she was charged, Tasha ran away to New York to avoid the warrant placed on her. She stayed in New York for six months, not talking to anyone in her family, before turning herself in and going to juvenile justice placement. While she was in placement, she was assigned a therapist. Tasha felt as though this therapist “already had it mapped out: why I was acting like that”, and thus felt like there was no point in talking to her about her childhood traumas. The therapist diagnosed her with ADHD, depression, and anxiety, and prescribed her Adderall, Concerta, and Seroquel. Tasha felt like what she needed more

than these medications was someone to take the time to talk to her and “get to know why I have those problems, or where those problems was coming from.” At 20 years-old, Tasha sought out therapy from a community health center, believing that getting to the root of her childhood experiences would make her a better parent and would improve her overall health.

After being in placement, Tasha got pregnant with her first son at 17. When he was a year old, she allowed his father to take him for an unsupervised visit and noticed that her son was “acting weird” when the father brought him back. He was not playing or engaging with her, and then his face started to swell. At a loss for what to do, Tasha rushed her son to the closest children’s hospital’s emergency room. Her son had a fractured skull and spinal fluid in his brain, a lacerated liver, and broken ribs on both sides. He required treatment by twenty-two specialists. Child Protective Services (CPS) removed him from her custody and opened a case against her with the Special Victims Unit. Tasha cooperated with the detectives and with her CPS case worker, but her worker testified against her at every hearing. If Tasha called often to check on her son, her worker would testify that she was “crazy” or unstable and not able to regain custody. If Tasha then held back, her worker would testify that she was unfit to regain custody because she was disengaged. Each court hearing resulted in a change to her visitation status from unsupervised visits to supervised, and back again. Tasha became frustrated: “If I don’t do enough, then I’m the abuser. If I do too much, then something’s wrong with me. How am I supposed to act?”. Over the course of a year, Tasha took court-mandated parenting classes and a set of parenting classes from an alternative provider in order to

prove to the system that she was prepared to have her son back. Then, the father's other child, a six-month-old, was removed from his mother's care for abuse. The investigation revealed that the father was the abuser - both children had similar injuries - but the father was never formally investigated by CPS. Tasha felt the injustice on behalf of the other mother as well: "It's like we were suffering because of something that he did. Nobody talked to him. He's not going back and forth to court. He's not getting threatened to get arrested. None of that."

Tasha's son has since been diagnosed with asthma and autism. When Tasha brought him to his pediatrician for his asthma, her doctor insisted that he was out of breath because of ADHD and hyperactivity. Tasha saw no signs of ADHD in her son and told the doctor so: "I said no it's an out of breath thing, it's like he can't breathe. It's to the point where his chest is like coming out, poking out and he's trying to catch his breath." When the doctor wanted to start her son on medication for ADHD to see if it would ease his symptoms, Tasha decided to switch providers. In the month that I spent with Tasha, her son was hospitalized for asthma four times, each time for two nights of observation. Tasha could not bring herself to visit her son in the hospital, a result of the lingering trauma of his abuse.

In the year that it took Tasha to regain custody of her son, she gave birth to her second child. She did not feel like she could take care of her second child, as she felt it was her fault her first born was abused and taken by CPS. She decided to give her second child up for adoption but chose an open adoption so that she could still have contact with him. Choosing adoption brought on a long depressive episode for Tasha, and she decided

to try for a third child. As of our last interview, her contact with her second child was being blocked by both the adoptive parents and the adoption agency. At 19, Tasha had regained custody of her first child and had given birth to her third child, a daughter.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter recounts participants' experiences with violence in their neighborhoods, homes, and schools, and conveys their interactions with police in their neighborhood in response to the violence they witness. The data presented in this chapter build on the existing knowledge base. First, capturing the experiences of older adolescents builds on a literature base built on the experiences of middle school youth. Second, by qualitatively capturing the ways youth are exposed to violence in multiple contexts, and how they conceptualize that violence. And, third, the inclusion of female experiences with violence, in particular how similar they are to the experiences of males in this study, is an important addition to a literature base dominated by the experiences of men in relation to violence. Tasha's story further illustrates the ways in which multiple forms of violence - interpersonal, structural, and symbolic - impact the everyday lives of youth. The following chapter looks at the way youth conceptualized and experienced their neighborhoods.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: Social Construction of Space and Identity**

The importance of space in the development of youth has been long documented. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1977, 1979, 1986, 1999) stresses the importance of contexts and space in human development. Equally important is how youth construct the meaning of the spaces in which they spend time, including neighborhoods, and how these meanings relate to their development. As Chapter One highlighted, space is intimately related to well-being and violence. Further, perceptions of space have lasting impacts, including how resources are allocated across neighborhoods. Neighborhood, as a unit of analysis, is typically difficult to define as the boundaries of neighborhoods are constantly evolving, making neighborhood effects difficult to capture. Sampson (2012) has valuably complicated our quantitative understanding of neighborhood effects by attempting to capture the ways in which outsiders react to neighborhoods and how these reactions then shape enduring perceptions, relationships, and behaviors that become a part of the city structure. The current study builds upon this notion by qualitatively capturing the ways in which neighborhood boundaries and meanings evolved for the youth, and how our neighborhoods are just one of many places that hold significance in shaping world-views.

This chapter presents the ways youth reflected on their neighborhoods in relation to the city as a whole, how they navigate these spaces, and the language they use to describe spaces.

### **Constructing Boundaries: Restrictions and Adaptions in Movement**

Youth in this study frequently discussed boundaries, both in a concrete sense (eg. North versus South), and in a more fluid sense (how it felt to move through various areas



of the city). Oftentimes these boundaries, concrete or fluid, dictated not only their movements in the city, but also *how* they moved. Here, Boston explains the implicit boundary he feels within his neighborhood:

*Boston: It's two halves. One half is like friendly, the other half is like sketchy. Like it's kinda sketchy, one half.*

Kalen: What do you mean by sketchy?

*Boston: Just like, like shady guys always walking around and always out all night. It kind of reminds me of North Philly now. They're just out all night and all you smell is like smoke and stuff. Its like two halves.*

Kalen: What makes them shady?

*Boston: They're extremely loud and they always stand around on the corner like they're supposed to be there. They always look around, and they're always like looking, look at your face to see if you're somebody else. So it's extremely shady. (Baseline Interview)*

Similarly, Kalia described perceived boundaries within her neighborhood and how these limited her movements:

*Kalia: I don't walk down Thanes. There's a reason why. Like if I...so coming from soccer, I take the train and I get off at Thanes and I could just walk straight to my house, but I don't because it's a bad area, it's a really bad area. There's certain areas, like I know are bad. Sometimes I still go through them if its like the daytime or whatever, but at night I'll go around and take a different direction, just cuz I know what kind of stuff happens in that area and I don't want to be in danger or by myself. And it's not necessarily Norris Square, actually, cuz like I said even at night I don't feel like...unless I'm like walking under the el and I'm like around Moresette or something cuz that is not a good area. Yeah, Thanes, I don't walk Thanes from the el.*

Kalen: What kind of stuff happens there?

*Kalia: In that area there just be a lot of like older guys hanging around and they just be sitting and bothering you and bothering you and bothering you until you go over there to just, you know. Or drive-bys, not drive-bys but like, yeah a lot of drive-bys be happening, a lot of drug related stuff. I mean, you could walk down the block and someone gets shot, that's real, especially around Thanes right after the el, that happens a lot. People fighting, just like...and people, you could be*

*minding your own business and somebody will pull you in the mix. Someone can come out of nowhere and just start arguing with you and then out of nowhere all these guys are jumping you, you know, that kind of stuff. (Member Check Interview)*

Some youth described concrete boundaries that dictated not only their movements, but also the way violence manifested in their neighborhoods. This was best exemplified by Future and Money Man, who both discussed a “war” happening in their neighborhoods:

*Future: It's like a war, but not a war. Say if you were on this side of the el. You from this side of the el, and I'm from this side of the el. We don't like each other.*

Kalen: So the north and south side of the el?

*Future: Yeah, Market is the border line. (Daily Overview 1)*

*Money Man: [When I was on the north side] I felt like I didn't want to be really around them because it's not my hood, but, since I'm by there I was waiting for the bus, so . . . I felt a little nervous.*

Kalen: Is that a safe area?

*Money Man: I mean, I'm not . . . it's like a war been going on between south side, north side. I live on south side. So they see any south side people, they just automatically thinking, "Oh, him go on south side. Let's tip." I ain't for it.*

Kalen: Let's tip?

*Money Man: Tip, it means like, you might as well just whoop his A and we'll quit. Get it over with. (Daily Overview 2)*

Tasha spoke to the ways these boundaries created territories that then resulted in more violence in the neighborhoods she lived in:

*Tasha: I feel that everywhere, even on the Boulevard. It's like, 'Oh, he crossed on our territory, so we got to teach him a lesson.' Like, what are you talking about? This is not your territory. You didn't make South Philly. Why do you feel like this is your territory? Guess what? When you dead and gone, it's going to be somebody else that feel like this is their territory. That's what I was basically telling people.*

*South Philly is going to always be here. You won't. They just don't understand.*  
(Baseline Interview)

Here, Desmond talks about the restraints of freedom within the context of her neighborhood:

*Desmond: I think of it as freedom, but then I think of it as when you walk outside, you might not know what may happen. So, its like a caution sign I put up when I walk out. I don't know, I don't know how to explain it but, sometimes I don't really like going nowhere because you don't ever know what happen. (Walking Interview)*

Similarly, Kareem described how neighborhood boundaries impacted the way he traveled:

*Kareem: That's right. People know me though so sometimes I'm good walking around. People know me. Other than that you can't just walk around without being alert. You can't just walk in certain peoples neighborhoods because they gone look at you like are you from here? Then it goes from that situation. Then that person might be like, don't matter if I'm from here. Then it goes from that. It escalates to a whole other situation. Then it be drama. That's why I stay to myself. (Walking Interview)*

### **“I would say it’s alive”: Metaphorical Representations of Space**

When asked to describe their neighborhoods, youth often relied on sensory descriptions that represented notions of “good” and “bad”, as well as racialized spaces. These metaphorical representations of space offered powerful descriptions of the neighborhoods in which these youth reside and in which they spend time.

For instance, Kalia’s description of her neighborhood, which has traditionally been home to one of the biggest Puerto Rican populations in the city, reflects the heritage and culture of the neighborhood:

*Kalia: I would say it's alive because we're, this whole area is like, it's a big Hispanic population, and we're very loud people. And, like here, in this park and that park right there, they have a lot of Hispanic festivals and all that kind of stuff, and just like in general. The Puerto Rican day parade is like, you know, it's a big*

*thing around this area too. You know, we're just like proud of who we are and we're loud about it. And also, I just feel like it's really vibrant, there's a lot of colors and whatnot. Especially the buildings around here, they're not so much anymore, but there used to be like a bunch of really loud buildings and even this park is really colorful. And just like around the area in general. The other park around here is really colorful too. So it's just like...that's just how I would describe it. A little dirty, but you know, you get used to it. (Baseline Interview)*

In our final interview, Kalia reflected on the ways she felt this culture changing with the gentrifying processes beginning in her neighborhood. Her response dually illustrates her view on whiteness:

*Kalia: I think it's like kinda sad, cuz it's like they come in and they're like changing everything and making everything more expensive and they just like...And also they're just trying to change how we are, like how we live kinda. We're used to a certain way of living and like...Remember how I was saying that we're loud, and we're all like close to each other, we all just hangout and stuff? And they're not like that. They're quiet and they have all their money, you know? So I feel like they're not only trying to change the neighborhood, they're just trying to change the way people live. Like, ok, so say if someone white moved into my neighborhood and she, or whoever the person may be, made it seem like it was wrong for neighbors to know each other or like people to help each other out in any kind of way, then it would it make the other people say like...maybe it would make them wonder why is she like this and maybe they would try to change it. You know, yeah, I can't really explain it. (Member Check Interview)*

Boston described himself as quiet because his neighborhood was quiet, and insisted that had he grown up in a different neighborhood, namely North Philadelphia, he would be a loud person. This was striking, given that in our interviews he often described Mount Airy with pride as where the wealthy or “uppity” black population in Philadelphia and North Philadelphia where the poorer black populations lived:

*Boston: This has happened before, this has definitely happened before. Asked me about my neighborhood? I tell them that its nothing like Camden. It's pretty much the opposite. I tell them that my, like the part of my neighborhood that I live in, is extremely quiet and he would not know how to handle himself. He'd be just as quiet as I am if he was in Mt. Airy, trust me.*

*You know, it's not just North Philly, but Camden and the Northeast too, cuz like I said those places are loud. And they're usually like....like I said they travel in groups. Mt. Airy, it's nothing like that. And I found that they always have a problem and there's not many fights in Mt. Airy. Like most places there's usually a fight, but there's never one there. (Baseline Interview)*

This linkage between “quiet or clean” and “good” contrasted with “loud or dirty” and “bad” came up often in interviews with other participants as well. Isabel drew upon the same metaphors to describe her neighborhood:

*Isabel: It was always like young kids or something like in my mom's area. And then when we used to live more towards down here on Health Street, we had I think maybe some old kind of neighbors so the area was always quiet but then I mean at school time there was always kids of course because the school was right across the street. But it was never like that bad of an area except for the one abandoned house next to us. Late at night sometimes it would have junkies and stuff just hanging out in there. And then it got really quiet once they tore the houses down to build the new houses that are in the area. So now I don't really know how it is down in that area cuz its....I guess it still seems quiet cuz it looks new. (Baseline Interview)*

Here, Alex uses similar language to describe her neighborhood, but with racial markers:

*Alexandra: I think everybody [in the city] thinks the same [about my neighborhood]. If I come down here with my friends, they come over, they be like, wow you live in a white neighborhood. It's real nice out here. It's quiet and stuff. They're so used to noise or commotion or something. I think that's what they think about, the same thing I think about it.*

Kalen: What does it mean to live white neighborhood?

*Alexandra: It's nice and friendly, if you go outside. That's what they say. When they come over they be like, all the house is clean. The house is clean, it's nice. Oh, you live in a white neighborhood. I'm like, I live in African neighborhood, technically, but okay.*

Kalen: What's the difference, then, between a white neighborhood and a black neighborhood?

*Alexandra: Because down Frankford most of the people that you see doing all of the crazy stuff are African American, so they put that stereotype on themselves. So mostly when my friends say, yeah, we live in a black neighborhood. It's 'hood. They call it the 'hood. That's what they call black neighborhoods, the 'hood. The*

*difference between a black neighborhood and a white neighborhood to everybody is its calmer, it's safer. You can walk outside and just say hi to your neighbors and wave or just walk and it's nicer. So that's what the difference is.*

Kalen: Why do you think race is attributed to that?

*Alexandra: Mostly in Philadelphia, when you see something in the bad parts . . . The bad parts meaning where the broken houses at, or the bad parts, they're always African American and Puerto Ricans. It's always them making up. Now I see white people do, too, but it's just the majority out there are African American. That's what people make into a stereotype. (Baseline Interview)*

Many participants differentiated between the terms “neighborhood” and “hood”, though this is best characterized by Desmond and Boston. Desmond defines what makes her neighborhood “hood”:

*Desmond: It's [my neighborhood] hood.*

Kalen: What does that mean to you?

*Desmond: It's ghetto, do you know what ghetto means?*

Kalen: What does ghetto mean to you?

*Desmond: If you go to . . . Let's see. If you go to Florida, how do you see that? Trees, grassy land, nice environment, right? Now you come here, you see cars parked on the street, concrete houses, locks, like, 'Oh, we is in the hood.' The hood is a place . . . I don't even wanna call it the hood, but it's a place that looks more like nothing on it. I don't know how to explain, but I just look at it like a place of bad people, violence, and stuff like that. Who wanna live in the hood? Who wanna live and wake up where we see trappers [people who sell drugs], and drugs, all this, selling weed, and we got kids around? Who wanna see that? I wouldn't want my kids to be around that either, because they could might be like, 'Oh, that's cool, you're making money. I wanna grow up and be like you.' Nah. (Baseline Interview)*

Boston also defined “hood” as a contrast to what he considered a “neighborhood”:

*Boston: Neighborhood. It's pretty much where you live to me, that's what it means to me. Like where you live. The people that are here. I think it's nicer way of saying ghetto with multiple people. Instead of like one race. You go to Bridesburg, you call it a neighborhood when really, I have not seen one black man come out of Bridesburg. And, I've been to Bridesburg. It wasn't a great experience. I mean there was a little girl who seemed kind of confused as to who the hell and what the*

*hell I was. It's pretty much just a nice ghetto, that's what neighborhood means to me, it's a nice ghetto. Like Mount Airy, a majority of rich or privileged African-American people. If you go to North Philly it is usually people who are not privileged at all.*

Kalen: Would you consider North Philly a neighborhood?

*Boston: Sure, but without the neighbor part. I'd call it the hood. That's the hood. They have forest in the back. Back yards look like there's no gates, all types of plants I've never seen before just growing, they have grass up to here. Three foot grass. Cats living like they are lions in there. Just pouncing on everything. Hunting, you see a cat get just down and just like attack. What the hell was that. Something would just run past you. Then you go to my neighborhood. I swear we have wild rabbits in my neighborhood. I saw one yesterday. I thought it was squirrel but it wasn't. It was a damn rabbit. (Member Check Interview)*

Kareem described his perceptions of the different neighborhoods he spent time in:

*Kareem: Yeah. It is kind of different. South Philly is a mixture of black people and Caucasian people. North Philly is all violence. Germantown is like all violence and then it's quiet and peace. Then Southwest is a bunch of kids that don't know what they doing. They just getting into everything. Then it's like if you not from that certain side of Philly, or wherever side of Philly you from, you supposed to stay on that side because if you go to a different side they gonna think you reppin a different set. You know what I'm saying? And then try to do something to you. That's why you can't just walk around by yourself and go into certain peoples' neighborhoods unless you got your friends with you. That's why it's not safe out here like that. (Baseline Interview)*

In contrast, Mouse felt such strong negative feelings toward his neighborhood that the term “neighborhood” no longer held meaning for him:

Kalen: Why doesn't it mean anything to you?

*Mouse: Because in mines, but right, in mine, it don't mean nothin', because it be drama. It be like, fights, people trying to jump people. So, that's why it don't mean nothin' to me.*

Kalen: What would it take for your neighborhood to feel like a neighborhood to you?

*Mouse: It be like, less drama, and less fights, and more nice people in the neighborhood. (Walking Interview)*

### **“Neighborhood means family”: Affective Expectations for Space**

Participants often expressed feeling like their neighbors and neighborhood felt like family. For these youth, this carried a multitude of meanings from having a safe space to “nosiness”.

Here, Future describes what he loves about his neighborhood, and why he does not want to leave:

*Future: People be outside and plus I know everybody 'round there. I know where everybody live. Everybody know my face so I can knock on the door and walk inside. Say if you live on my block, we neighbors, I knock on your door and I went to school with your son or something or your daughter. Knock on the door, I'll go right inside the house, eat. They be able to do the same thing with me; knock on my door, eat, sleep there for a couple hours. 'All right then, bye.', 'All right.' Once my hood, we get a face and we know that we can trust you, you cool. Just don't break our trust. Don't steal from our house and don't do no weird stuff. (Baseline Interview)*

For Money Man, neighborhood meant family. When I asked him about his friends during the baseline interview, he responded that he did not have friends, he had family, elaborating that he considered everyone he grew up with family. He defined neighborhood:

*Money Man: Neighborhood? Neighborhood be all like family to me, like, if you all grew up together, we are family. That's how I'm saying. And then some neighborhoods like, when you grow up with them so long, like . . . My grandma incident (her death), they was all helping me get through it and all that, like. (Walking Interview)*

Kalia expressed that the familial feeling in her neighborhood gave her protection:

*Kalia: I think I said that everyone in my neighborhood feels like family. Like, I know a lot of people around that area so it doesn't really feel like I'm in danger. Like I always feel like there's someone around that I can go to if something happens or . . . even like then . . . I think that I don't really feel like in danger. (Walking Interview)*



In describing what she liked about her neighborhood, Isabel reflected on how people took care of each other:

*Isabel: I guess . . . how groups are with each other. Like you can tell when groups are with each other and they care about each other and everything. And of course there always needs to be some other group or other person but everybody is related to a certain amount of people. So everybody has their own clique, their own group. So I guess that's kind of good in a way. I mean, I guess how the groups are, but I mean like the groups treat each other as family. So they're never like, unless something crazy happens, they're never against each other. (Baseline Interview)*

Boston talked about how his neighbors in Mt. Airy and his childhood neighbors in North Philadelphia acted like family, but in different ways. For him, his Mt. Airy neighbors acted more like parents, monitoring his behavior and reporting to his mother, whereas his North Philadelphia neighbors were more like siblings, offering him protection whenever he needed it:

*Boston: I just can't stand it. I don't like the quietness all the time. Sometimes it's fine, like when I'm annoyed it's fine. But I like, I feel like if you say something everybody's gonna hear you. Cuz like the people literally stand in their windows and just listen. Sometimes you might just someone's silhouette just walk past the window. You might see someone like this (pretends to have a curtain over half his face). They do that in Mt. Airy. In North Philly, everybody just minds their business. And I know because my mom does it. She has her ears out the window all the time, all the time. You go upstairs to her room and she'll be in the window, just staring outside. And I don't like that feeling of just people watching . . . They act like family. Like they act like the parents. They're very nosy, very quiet, and very greedy.*

Kalen: What do you mean by greedy?

*Boston: You know, Mt. Airy is like everybody has money, so like I'm pretty sure the lady that came and asked for sugar, she had sugar. She just wanted some of mine. She didn't want to open her sugar, she wanted our sugar. So what was I supposed to say, 'no, you can't have it?' My mom has hidden . . . she's hidden from that lady a few times. So yeah, they're greedy.*

Kalen: What do you think makes them greedy?

*Boston: They always want something. Like there's always something they want. There's somebody . . . so if my mom had got something so she could put it out in her garden or yard or something. The lady across the street is gonna want it too, and they're gonna want it more. They're gonna want something more than that. So my mom, she put a tree out front and there's someone that's gonna wanna redesign something on their house too. So there's always somebody fighting for attention.*

Kalen: How is that different from your neighbors when you lived in the Northeast?

*Boston: Nobody . . . well the Northeast is not as pretty, so there's not as much you can do. You can't really do much. There's not really trees in anybody's yard.*

Kalen: Were the neighbors different there though?

*Boston: Yeah. They fought a lot, they like play fought too. But it was very different. If they came over to ask for sugar you could be sure they didn't have any. It was different. (Baseline Interview)*

### **“The North Philly in me came out”: Constructing Identity in Relation to Space**

Neighborhood plays a vital role in youth development, as young people tend to spend a lot of time in their neighborhoods. The youth in this study typically identified strongly with their neighborhoods. For example, as mentioned in the above sections, Boston felt as though he was a quiet person strictly because the neighborhood he lived in was quiet. Here, Boston describes an incident where he felt the “North Philly” side of him came out:

*Boston: It was...some guy had come up to my friend and just started something and there was another guy that came over and he said 'what did you say to my friend?' So my friend was like 'what are you talking about?' And then someone else came over and said, 'what did you just say to my friend?' And he was like, 'nothing, we don't want any trouble'. And eventually he punched my friend in the face. And so me, you know, the North Philly in me. I ran over, I hit the guy or whatever and there was like three more people than what we had. They just jumped us.*

Kalen: When you say the “North Philly” in you came out, what does that mean?

*Boston: Yes, yes. There wasn't a...I wasn't gonna let someone just come up and hit my friend. At least not in front of me. It's what had happened. Cuz I know if I just sat there and let it happen he would have felt some type of way too. That never happens like that. Me and him, if somebody hits me, he's going at them. And if someone hits him, I'm definitely going to see what's happening with them. It just happens. (Baseline Interview)*

When asked what was good about his neighborhood, Future responded with a trait that he felt everyone in his neighborhood embodied, loyalty. Throughout our interviews loyalty came up both as a signifier of his neighborhood, for example in comparison to South Philadelphia, which he described as “grimey”, and as something he prided himself on:

*Future: What's good? We live and learn and we keep it real with everybody. We don't hide nothing. We just tell you straight from the door, listen this is how I feel if you got a problem you ain't got to like me, but I just kept it real with you. It's loyalty. (Baseline Interview)*

While describing what she did not like about her neighborhood, saying that she struggled with raising her children in a place where violence and crime were so prevalent, Tasha expressed an internal association between these conditions and blackness:

*Tasha: I'm not trying to be smart. I'm not being racist or anything, but it's like, when black people come up there [into neighborhoods], they find a way to destroy stuff. And I'm not being smart. It's nothing about being racist. I'm just saying from what I see. My point of view is that's why we look bad as a whole. We look bad as African-American people. We don't cherish our stuff, or neighborhood.*

During the baseline and daily overview interviews, Conner was overall positive about his neighborhood. He said he felt that there was not too much violence and enjoyed his neighbors, though he did not travel far and took precautions when he did. During our walking interview, when I asked him if he wanted to share anything else with me, he

replied that he wished he was born in New Jersey, expressing that where he lives has repercussions on other aspects of his identity:

*Conner: I mean things changed from the violence and stuff like that. If I was to say anything else I wouldn't rule probably . . . Like give myself an answer for anything else like that. Pretty much I would have to say if I had to be born again I kind of would wish I was in Jersey. ...I mean probably if I didn't have to go through too much issues like . . . school and stuff like that. If I came across probably like friends that was kind of not like trying to get into danger but away from danger. Most people I hung out with they always want to get into trouble a lot. I would always walk home at the end of the day. They would probably get into some trouble. I just say, "Okay. I see y'all in class tomorrow." It's tough. Just call me when y'all safe or probably up or probably able to confess or probably not getting booked or for something like that. It was . . . Most times they probably get in trouble and I would try to stay away from then.*

Kalen: You think if you had a different friend group you wouldn't have had so many challenges?

*Conner: Yeah. Pretty much if I was in Jersey I probably would have different friends probably. A better neighborhood.*

Kalen: What would make a neighborhood better than where you are at?

*Conner: I mean . . . Because right now everything's pretty cool but if it was night time than that's a whole other situation. (Walking Interview)*

On our walking interview, Money Man described a “street rule” that governed his life and the lives of his friends. This “street rule” was an integral part of his identity:

*Money Man: Oh, yeah, sometimes because since there's a lot of people, you know, there's little street rule. They like, F the O, everybody trying to be like everything. They really don't bang with the cops like this. Or the cops be trying to make the hood safe, they can't do they job right because sometimes they don't know what be going on. And . . .*

Kalen: You said it's a street rule?

*Money Man: Yeah, a street rule.*

Kalen: What other things are a part of the street rule?

*Money Man: No snitching. You can't be out here in people business, you know. That's how you get yourself hurt. So like, you mean, you usually gotta stick to*

*yourself out here, it like, be a maze like, stay away from like situations that's gone put you in crazy predicaments like . . . Well, first things first, don't be something that you not. That's first of all. Like everybody out here be trying to, try to sell weed, but they really not like that. 'Cause at the end of the day if you get caught and you can't do nothing about it, and you don't wanna be in jail, the first thing you gone do is turn around and tell on your mans. So that's gone get you killed. That's why there be a lot of murders nowadays, because of that. So I want to prevent and just to stick to myself. Can't hear, can't see nothing. I have not even been around that place. Like, I won't even know what you talking about.*

### **Intersections of Place and Identity: Gentrification and Whiteness**

**Kalia's story.** I met 16-year-old Kalia at an indoor soccer practice in a recreation center in North Philadelphia. She sat by herself on a bench, engrossed in a book, head down, undistracted by the chaos of the practice and the other girls who were giggling and chatting. Kalia grew up in East Kensington in the Norris Square Area with her mother, father, and five siblings. She still identified this area as her neighborhood, though she has been living further north in the Fairhill neighborhood for the past seven years with her mother and three younger siblings. Her attachment to Norris Square was apparent from our first interview, which she had requested take place in the middle of the Norris Square Park. When asked about what she liked about her neighborhood she replied, "All the memories that I have here, just growing up, being a kid."

Her attachment to Norris Square was intricately related to her memories of her childhood there; during our interviews she often spoke about when her parents were still together and the memories they created as a family throughout the neighborhood. On our walking interview, her first stop was her old middle school, where she recounted her mother dropping her and her siblings in the morning and her father picking them up after work "when he had a job", and the field trips to Norris Square, just a few blocks from the school. Our second stop was her childhood home, as we turned the corner to approach the

house her affect shifted from her usual reserved nature and she became animated. Her joy was palpable as she excitedly recounted her memories from the house, each one painting a picture of a happy family unit. The house was boarded up, looking as though it had been abandoned for a few years. While evaluating the boards, Kalia took a step back and commented on how the houses on the block had changed: "I'm surprised they haven't knocked it down, it's the only house from the old houses that hasn't got knocked down besides that one. Like, they redid this one but this is like also an old house that was there. There was a house here, and this was like a big lot (pointing at a community garden that is now next to her old house) that was just like filled with a lot of stuff."

As we walked away from her old house, Kalia began describing how her parents' separation and divorce impacted her siblings, from the verbal abuse they suffered from her mother (as recounted in Chapter Four), to the trauma of seeing her parents need medical attention or getting handcuffed after fighting: "They were together for 13 years though, but they had a lot of issues. They always had a lot of problems and then eventually they just drove each other crazy. Like literally crazy, they both have mental problems. My dad also has a lot of health issues and a lot of them developed while he was with my mom. And I've seen it get to the point where my parents are arguing and an ambulance had to be called for my dad because he was freaking out, like he couldn't breathe or nothing. He was like outside on the steps with an air mask on and stuff, like he couldn't breathe, he was freaking out and stuff. Oh, he has high blood pressure, so it's gotten to them. And I've seen my mom call the cops on my dad, I've seen my dad in handcuffs, my mom in handcuffs."

Right after their separation, Kalia moved from Norris Square to North Philadelphia with her mother. Despite living in North Philadelphia for the last seven years, Kalia continued to view Norris Square as home. The nonprofit soccer club she was played for is located there, her afterschool art program is also there, and the square is where she prefers to hang out with her friends. Norris Square is rapidly changing, like so many neighborhoods surrounding it, with gentrification taking hold. Kalia described the way the changes made her feel: "It's gonna look different, especially with all the new buildings, there's gonna be different people, there's gonna be a whole different vibe...And even though there are certain times when it's not that great an area, but it's still where I come from and it's my roots and I don't want that to change."

Kalia described these changes as stemming from "white people moving into" her neighborhood. She mentioned on a few occasions that people viewed her as white - she was lighter skinned than her siblings and she knew "how to talk white and proper" when she felt it was needed. During our final interview, I asked her about how that made her feel, especially given the many asides she made about white people changing her neighborhood. She said she "wasn't a fan of the white race", and elaborated on her fear of her neighborhood changing because of the population she perceived to be moving in: "Remember how I was saying that we're loud, and we're all like close to each other, we all just hangout and stuff? And they're not like that. They're quiet and they have all their money, you know?"

For Kalia, whiteness equated to money and power: "It's mainly white people in power, and also people with the highest education usually are white people so they're the

ones in charge... They are on some type of position of power. Even if you're not, like just being white, people see your perspective as something that they should follow". Part of her frustration with whiteness was people outside her neighborhood "seeing her as white", for example she lamented one day that her teachers treated her differently from her older sister because she "looked white" and so they thought she was "smarter than Maria". However, Kalia had been first in her class since her freshman year of high school and was hoping that trend continued. As she equated education with power and money, she saw her success in school as the only way she would be able to take care of her family: "I'm pretty sure I'm the smartest person in my family, like I've always been good at school and I feel like a certain pressure on me. Like I need to be the one to get a good education, I need to be the one to get a good job so I can help everybody. We struggle a lot in my house, especially with money, especially. And I feel like if I don't...like I don't wanna live that either but I also wanna be able to help my mom and my siblings". Kalia carried this responsibility seriously, since their divorce her mother lived depended on government assistance, and she resented the stigma she saw her family face.

She further elaborated on the ways that power and whiteness were related for her, in particular in the way that she perceived change to happen. From her view, most movements were white-led, as white people had "less to lose" than people of color. When asked why she thought this was the case she emphatically said: "And it's because they're told their whole life: 'You're white, you're gonna do something with your life or you're gonna change something.' You don't hear that kinda...I mean in school they say 'oh you know, all it takes is one person to change' or whatever, but you don't really...it's not



necessarily, not that it's not true, but it's not realistic right now, or nor has it ever been for people of color. People don't see people of color as someone they should follow." This reminded me of something I had jotted in my field notes on the day I met Kalia at her indoor soccer practice: "One girl showed interest in study, though seems reserved and was set apart from the rest of the team during their break. She asked me thoughtful questions about the design of the study, my motivation for doing the work, and why I was a social worker. She may not follow-up though, when I asked her if she'd like to participate she said she would think about it, but felt like no one would want to hear what she has to say." (Field Note, 2/25/17)

## **Conclusion**

This chapter lays out the ways in which participants conceptualized and navigated neighborhoods as they traveled throughout the city. The data presented in this chapter builds on the existing neighborhood literature by illustrating the ways youth think about boundaries, both hard and soft, in the city, examining the language they assign to the spaces they spend time in and their affective expectation for these spaces, and exploring the ways identity is related to neighborhood. The chapter concludes with Kalia's story, illustrating the ways how race, gentrification, and power collide with identity formation in adolescence. The following chapter explores the methodological findings related to heart rate and place.

## CHAPTER SIX: Heart Rate and Place

One of the goals of this study was to explore the physiological responses youth experienced throughout their days in order to better understand the mechanisms through which long term health impacts from adverse childhood experiences take hold, as discussed in Chapter One. As such, it was not only the questions that this study sought to answer that were exploratory, but also the methodology. In particular, the Pocketfinder, a GPS device that tracks location in real time paired with the Garmin Vivosmart HR watch to measure heart rate were being piloted to see if the technology would capture the desired variables and work in conjunction with each other. Additionally, the walking interview was being piloted as a method and as a way of triangulating the sedentary interviews that accompanied the GPS and heart rate technology.

During the baseline interview, participants were asked a series of questions from the Urban Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey (Urban ACE). This was administered to understand the baseline of adverse experiences the youth had experienced in their life thus far. The highest score possible on the survey was 22. The scoring of the Urban ACE is one point per “yes” to a traumatic experience, and a weighted scoring for questions with a scaled response. The table below shows the neighborhood and UrbanACE score for each participant:

Table 5. UrbanACE Score by Participant

Name	Age	UrbanACE Score
Kalia	16	17
Isabel	17	12
Boston	17	7
Mouse	19	7

Kareem	18	8
Money Man	17	6
Future	19	10
Conner	17	7
Alexandra	17	6
Tasha	20	15
Kayla	18	9
Desmond	21	5

### **Urban ACE and Heart Rate**

The UrbanACE was administered to each participant during the baseline interview. Scoring of the UrbanACE was conducted for each participant after all interviews were completed. This timing allowed me to write reflexive memos, comparing each participant's UrbanACE score at the baseline interview with the data gathered over the course of my time spent with them. For most participants, UrbanACE scores did not reflect the experiences they shared over time, thus it is possible that scores would have been higher had the tool been used at the last interview. This could be attributed to youth feeling more trust in our relationship over time and the use of multiple interviews, both of which allowed youth to explore various aspects of their lives. For example, Conner's score of 7 would undoubtedly have increased given the loss and challenges we discussed during his walking interview.

As outlined in Chapter One, literature on the impact of experiencing ACEs reports a wide range of long-term health impacts including increased rates of diabetes, heart disease, substance use, risky sexual behavior, and early mortality (Anda et al., 2006; Bellis, Lowey, Leckenby, Hughes, & Harrison, 2014; Danese & McEwen, 2012; Flaherty

et al., 2013; Kalmakis & Chandler, 2014; Karandinos, Hart, Montero Castrillo, & Bourgois, 2014; Monnat & Chandler, 2015; Reiser, McMillan, Wright, & Asmundson, 2014; Salinas-Miranda et al., 2015; Wade et al., 2014). However, studies on the impact of ACEs have been primarily retrospective in nature, focusing on adults. The use of the Garmin Vivosmart HR, paired with daily interviews, illustrated the connections between heart rate, emotions, and health. The average resting heart rate for young adults ranges from 60-100 beats per minute (Fleming, Thompson, Stevens, Heneghan, Plüddeman, Maconochie, Tarassenko, & Mant, 2011) and this range held true for the youth in this study. Resting heart rate varies daily due to a variety of factors and was therefore not captured for each youth. Instead, peaks of over 100 beats per minute were documented and probed to further this exploration. For example, Tasha was pre-diabetic, hypertensive, and struggled with obesity and her UrbanACE score was 15. As her story in Chapter Five highlights, she also experienced violence in many contexts throughout her life, as well as other adverse life events. Tasha's heart rate increased with the smallest amount of activity, resulting in her avoiding activity and travel. The map below shows her activity paths over four days of tracking:

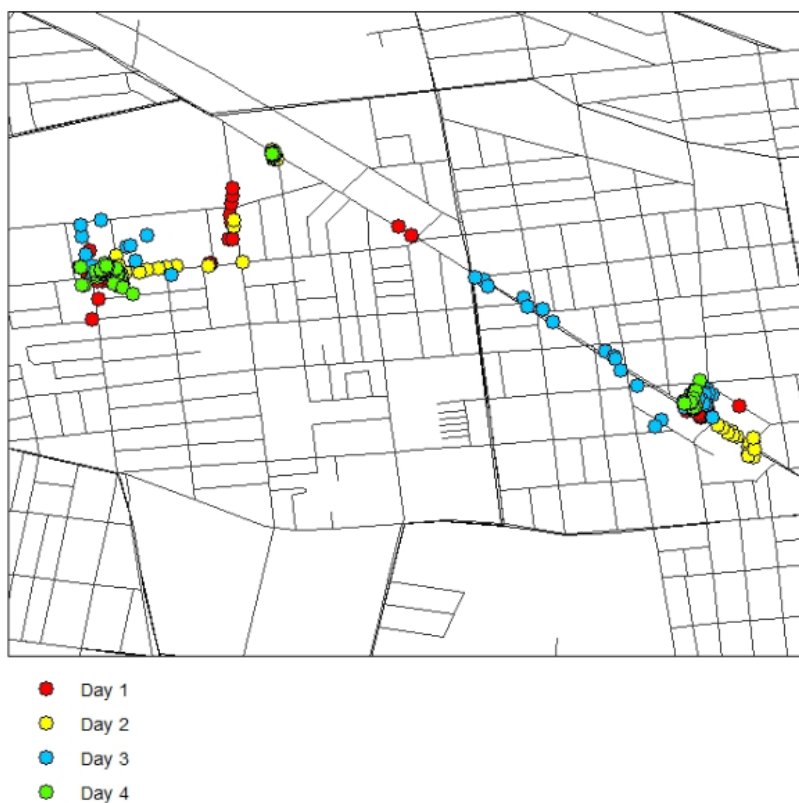


Figure 5. Tasha Path Map

As Tasha's map shows, she did not leave her neighborhood over the course of the four days. Her travel was dually limited by her health and by fear, as she did not trust that she would be safe while walking in her neighborhood with her children. Tasha's hypertension played a major role in limiting her mobility. When we reviewed her heart rate data, she talked about getting migraine headaches and feeling on the verge of passing out. Still, she was hesitant to seek medical attention or to take her prescribed medications:

*Tasha: I'm supposed to [take my blood pressure medication] every day. But I don't, because I don't want to be dependent on that medicine. But I know I need it, but I wait until my stuff gets really bad, because he gets . . . and that's the problem, like, it goes from bad to worse. Like that headache, I just got rid of it today. Earlier, before I came in here. That's how long it was lasting.*

Kalen: Yes, your heart rate went up to 115 [from 60] at 1 o'clock.

*Tasha: Yeah, I thought I was gonna have to go to the hospital. My heart was beating really fast. I had a bad headache, I couldn't see. I was bad, I was bad off.*

Kalen: Have you gone to the hospital for your pressure before?

*Tasha: Lots of times. I actually had to after I had my son, one time. It was so bad that they kept me three hours after he got discharged. It was so high. They had to make sure I didn't have an infection and all that stuff, but it wasn't, it was just my . . . they found out my pressure, I had high blood pressure. It was bad.*

Kalen: So you've had high blood pressure for a while?

*Tasha: Yeah, for like three years, almost.*

Kalen: How high does your blood pressure get?

*Tasha: One time it was like . . . I don't even know. It was like, it was so high, they were like, "Can you function right now?" And I'm like, "I can function, I'm okay." They're like, "You sure?!" It was so high, I don't know. They kept me, that's how high it was. It was so high that they kept me past my discharge time, because they thought . . . it was dead pressure. That's how high it was, like dead pressure. To the point where somebody dies. They had to give me IVs and all this stuff. They gave me pressure medicine. Everything they could do, they tried to do it. Because it was like . . . they were like, 'You got dead blood pressure, like somebody that's dead,' like not blood . . . I don't know. Basically it was like somebody that was going into, you know, pressure comes with like, you can go into cardiac arrest and stuff like that. Yeah, it was something like that. It was to the point where somebody that's going into cardiac arrest pressure. But I wasn't, I was just . . . I had a headache and stuff like that, but I wasn't . . . I didn't feel like nothing was happening but a headache, a migraine. My eyes . . . I couldn't open my eyes or stuff like that.*

Kalen: How's it feel when your blood pressure goes up? How do you know you have to take your blood pressure medication?

*Tasha: I get a migraine. Not a headache, where it's like, oh my head it pounding. No, it was like, my eyes, like something is literally shooting in my eyes, like, I don't know. Like the muscle in my eyes is like, somebody is just poking at it. That's how I feel. Yeah, I can't see, I can't look at stuff, it feels like somebody is cracking me in my head with a hammer. It is bad. (Daily Overview 4)*

Similar to Tasha, Conner's heart rate increases were also mostly related to his health and wellbeing. Conner spent most of his time split between the GED Center, his home, and the gym. Conner struggled with obesity and had been diagnosed as pre-

diabetic a month before we began our interviews. He had joined an affordable gym, but it was far from his neighborhood so he had to take two trolley lines to get there. He often traveled to the gym between 8 and 10 PM so that he could avoid crowded trolleys and attempt to circumvent the gun violence in his neighborhood. If he missed this window, he did bodyweight exercises at home. Throughout our time together, Conner described himself as a “big thinker”, meaning that he would often think through every possible failure that could keep him from his goals, and would often get focused on how future plans could fall through. His anxiety was apparent in his demeanor in our interviews; he only appeared relaxed in speech and affect during our walking interview, whereas during our sedentary interviews he fidgeted nervously, his answers coming out in quick bursts. His heart rate increases were often related to his anxiety. During our first overview of his heart rate data, he had an initial increase of 107 (from 65) at 6:35 PM, that steadily increased to a peak of 135 at 7:15 PM. When I asked what happened then, Conner replied that he had gotten so overwhelmed thinking about the future, he had given himself a migraine (a theme that continually occurred during our heart rate overviews), and lamented that his tendency to “think big” gets in the way of his success at times:

*Conner: Sometimes I'm thinking the main thing that I'm trying to think something of is like what should I do for next year and stuff like that. How to finish [the GED] quick and stuff like that. I try not try to think too much. Like I'll take my strategies a step further and stuff like that. Like keep myself in the game, but not too overwhelming as much. There's too much, just too overwhelmed for like the future and stuff like that. It's like there's so much- got me thinking a lot.*

Kalen: Do you feel like you get that way a lot?

*Conner: Yeah, like it's very often. Most of the times I just have to take a deep breath and just go outside just enjoy the fresh air and then come back in.*

Conner's map (Figure 6) illustrates how he, similarly to Tasha, stayed within the bounds of his neighborhood.



Figure 6. Connor Path Map

Often, participants stated that though they were exposed to interpersonal violence in their neighborhoods, they were not personally affected by this violence because it happened with such frequency. However, their heart rate often revealed physical reactions to this violence, even if the youth reported no affective change. This was most exemplified by Money Man, who in our baseline interview said that he was no longer impacted by the gunshots in his neighborhood because he was “used to it”. During our second daily



overview interview, while we were reviewing his heart rate, there was a sudden increase from 58 to 116, with a steep decline after at 10 PM:

*Money Man: 10? I wasn't doing nothing around 10. I was at my house.*

Kalen: Anything happen?

*Money Man: Nah, I was laying down.*

Kalen: Any noises outside?

*Money Man: A gunshot, but my heart wasn't beating fast.*

Kalen: Well, you might not have felt it beating fast, but it looks like it went up and then it went right back down.

*Money Man: Yeah, I heard a gunshot.*

This happened two more times during our daily overview interviews. Below, Money Man's path map (Figure 7), demonstrates how he traveled to various areas across the city, thus making himself feel more vulnerable at times. His map is missing data from day three as he left the tracker at his father's house that day. He said that he did not react, even though the females in his life reacted to the gunshots because they feel more emotions. Following this up during our walking interview, Money Man elaborated:

Kalen: So in our first interview, you said that girls just think differently about violence than guys do. What do you mean by that?

*Money Man: Well, see females got a lot more emotional than guys do. Like, during a movie a female could just cry at any given time. So, like, with that being said, they do got like a lot of emotions and I be seeing it a lot too, cause my girlfriend, she do got a lot of emotions, too. And I be seeing it. So like, I don't got that many, much of emotions. So like, 'cause I'm a guy. I mean, like, it's different 'cause like, remember how my hear was beating?*

Kalen: Yeah.

*Money Man: Well, I didn't feel it wasn't beating that fast? When the gun shot, I didn't know it was like that, so.*

Kalen: So you feel like you're not as aware?

*Money Man: No, not really. (Walking Interview)*

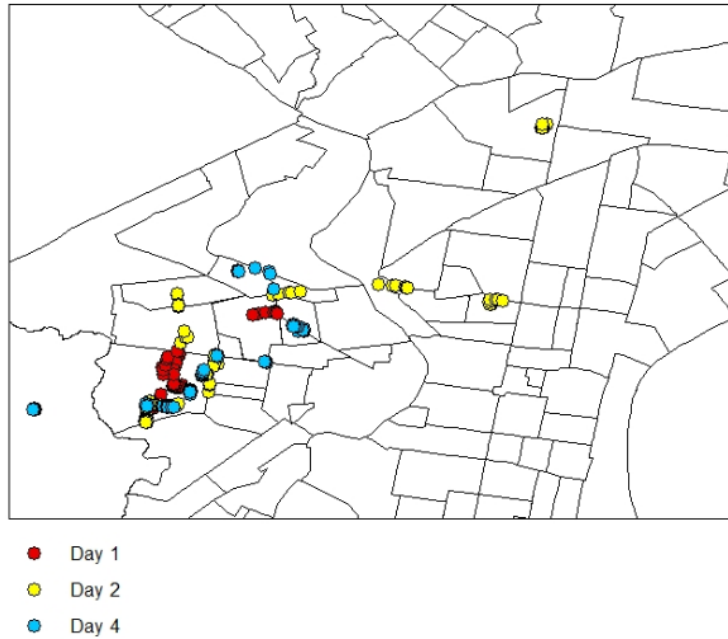


Figure 7. Money Man Path Map

For some of the male participants, heart rate was also impacted by interactions with the police. As described in Chapter Four, many of the youth had negative interactions and responses to the police in their neighborhoods. The physiological reaction to police interactions is best illustrated by Future, who had many interactions with the police during our time together. For example, the morning of our first heart rate interview, Future had a particularly tense interaction with the police and came into the meeting feeling “hyped up”. His heart rate increased to 106 BPM when approached by the police, and elevated to 130 BPM within ten minutes, remaining elevated for thirty minutes:

*Future: Let me tell you about today. Well today, I'm walking to school. Got a bacon, egg, and cheese in my hand and I got a black [coffee]. I'm walking and eating. I gotta finish my sandwich. The cop pulled up on me. Knocked a whole half of my sandwich out of my hand. Then told me to get against the wall, and put me in cuffs.*

Kalen: Why?

*Future: For nothing. They thought I had dope, weed, and pills on me and then, I'm like, 'I don't got nothing.' 'Show me ID.' 'I'm not showing you my ID because why you got me in cuffs?' 'Since you don't wanna give me your name, I'll throw you in back of the car.' I said, 'All right.' 'You gonna be mad as soon as I get in the station.' He said, I'm like 'Listen, I'm being obedient. I'm on probation so therefore if you do take me in, and if you go ask my P.O. I'm suing you.' They didn't even read my rights, they didn't do nothing.*

Kalen: They didn't read you your rights or anything?

*Future: Nope. They just threw me right in back of the car. Then my old heads [friend over 30 years-old] say to them 'Yo, what you doing to my nephew? Grinding on him...' and all of that cussing them clean out. He told him back up, grabbed his gun. I'm like, 'Oh'. Then the other cop in the car tried to get me to rat on my hood.*

Kalen: They were trying to use you as an informant?

*Future: Yeah. I'm like, 'Listen, if you want to take me in, then take me in. I'm already late for school, so. . . What's up?' 'No, we're not going to take you in but we need to question you because we feel as if you were out here.' I said, 'I don't want to be out here like that. The only time you see my face is when I'm here waiting for the bus, or I'm picking up somebody from the house.' They kept playing with me.*

Kalen: Did they buy you another sandwich?

*Future: No. Wasted my last \$3. I had to use \$2 on the bus. Now I've got no money, and I'm heated, and that sandwich is good. If that wouldn't have happened that sandwich would've been good.*

Kalen: Does that happen to you a lot?

*Future: Yeah. Not a lot, but like it has to be enough. They get the same results because I don't like them. (Daily Overview 1)*

Changes in heart rate were also caused by relational dynamics. At times, this was due to romantic partnerships. For example, when I met Boston he was between relationships and was stressed because his senior prom was approaching. When we would review his heart rate each day, we found that every time he spoke with three of his female friends, whether in person or on the phone, his heart rate would start to increase. At our last interview, Boston asked me which girl had made his heart beat faster so that he could ask her to his prom.

Likewise, Kayla and Desmond had both started new relationships at the onset of our time together. Kayla was seeing two young men, one with whom she was trying to break up and one that was a new relationship. Both relationships were long distance, as both young men lived in her home country. Her heart rate increases were primarily tied to both young men, reaching 128 during a fight and as high as 151 when she began talking to her new boyfriend. Similarly, Desmond's heart rate reacted to her new girlfriend. In all of our interviews, an affective switch would flip when Desmond would talk about her new girlfriend; her happiness was palpable, so it was unsurprising to find this reflected in her heart rate.

Kalia's heart rate increases were often times related to her family. As outlined in Chapters Four and Five, Kalia's family had periods of turmoil, and Kalia was deeply impacted by her parents' divorce. Her heart rate increased whenever she interacted with her mother. This was so common that before we reviewed her heart rate data she would preemptively tell me at what times she had interacted with her mother and what those interactions entailed. Given the history of abusive language Kalia experienced, as

discussed in Chapter Four, this tumultuous relationship was weighted. Often, these interactions centered around Kalia's frustrations feeling restrained by having to provide childcare for her siblings with little communication from her mother. Below is an exchange on a day when her heart rate went up to 146 because of an argument with her mother that began with Kalia attending church more and evolved into Kalia feeling like she had to protect her siblings:

Kalen: Do you guys argue a lot about church?

*Kalia: No, usually, like not really. But then she started coming at my little sister because she wanted to go play outside. And she's 11, but she wanted to go play in the backyard and she was like 'no, you need to go pray' and I was like how do you sound right now? Like, can you just listen to yourself, like she's a kid. Let her go play. And she didn't let her.*

Kalen: Do you argue with your mom a lot over your siblings?

*Kalia: Over my siblings? Yeah. Sometimes she just like, she just be making no sense, like she just be telling them. I just be like can you just listen to yourself for a second. But yeah, she be working my nerves on the daily. I don't want to live there anymore.*

Kalen: What makes you not want to live there?

*Kalia: There's too much, there's just too much, she's just too much. My older sister and my brother, they both don't live there anymore so it's not as much chaos. And it's not even a stage, cuz you know how everyone goes through that stage where they just like don't like their mom? I really have issues with her, like I really do. But I like put up with it.*

Kalen: What are your issues with your mom?

*Kalia: Just like we argue all the time about ridiculous stuff, like stuff that we don't even have to be arguing about. But because she's just like...she's um, she's hardheaded about all that stuff. It's not even like...you know how teenagers when they usually argue with their parents they're like 'oh it's because she won't let me do something'? That's not even why we be arguing. We just be arguing over church a lot. We argue over soccer a lot, cuz she complains that I'm never home and stuff and whatever. And what else. We be arguing about my siblings that don't*

*even live there anymore and my dad because she always wants to bring them up and start some type of problem and I'm just like tired of the drama.*

Kalen: Why does she want you to be home more?

*Kalia: Cuz she wants me to watch the children cuz she don't wanna be there. That's why. She's the one that don't even be home. The responsibility gets put on my younger sister, the one that's 14, to watch Christian and Briana. And it's like ridiculous. And I was in that position and I'm still like in that position. But it's just like, she wants me there so that way she can be out more. Because I'm older, I'm the oldest in the house, so she knows I can stay with them all day and not have a problem. But it's just cuz she wanna be out doing who knows what. Like nobody be knowing what she be doing all day. (Daily Overview 3)*

Emotionally driven heart rate increases were also common. Stress and happiness were big drivers of these increases. Stress related increases were primarily related to home life, education, and work. While all participants experienced these types of increases, Alexandra's heart rate best exemplifies these emotional responses. Alexandra was working at a fast food restaurant part-time and had shifts at the restaurant during three of our four heart rate interviews. During her shifts at the restaurant, her heart rate would increase due to negative stress from management, co-workers, and customers. Her stress was so prevalent that her heart rate would increase from resting (about 60) to 124-130 when she approached the restaurant each day, and would stay elevated throughout her shift, typically four to six hours. For example, during our last heart rate overview which we conducted at her work, her heart rate increased to 124 while walking into work at 4 PM and stayed elevated until she left at 10 PM, reaching a peak of 131 at 7:30. When I asked Alexandra about how she felt while at work, she replied:

*Alexandra: This job is very stressful when we have rushes. Fridays and Saturdays are our busiest days. I'm running around trying to get stuff. Anything from there to when I clocked out is because of the rush. My manager gets . . . you can't see him now, but he gets really loud and yells at us. That could be from irritation, from me*

*running around. He scares me sometimes, because he just yells. All of the heart rates that could just be from that. (Daily Overview 4)*

Alexandra's heart rate also increased out of happiness, most notably while dancing to Beyoncé (121 beats per minute) or while dancing and singing in the car with her mother and aunt (145 beats per minute). As mentioned in Chapter Three, the daily overview interviews were necessary to delineate between prolonged stress, as Alexandra experienced at her workplace and which could be a contributor to the long-term negative health outcomes outlined in Chapter One, and moments of heightened positive emotions, as she experienced with her mother and friends, that may cause a physiological reaction but is not necessarily unhealthy. Alexandra's path map (Figure 8) aids in visualizing how often she traveled across the city.

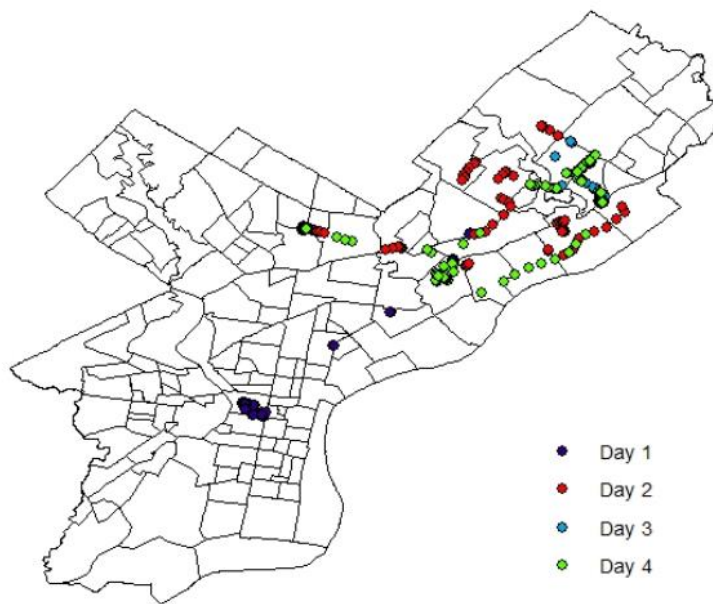


Figure 8. Alexandra Path Map

## **Walking Interviews: Benefits of Motion**

In addition to the heart rate technology, this study was also innovative in the way place was examined. Walking interviews are traditionally done in more bounded spaces (*i.e.* college campuses, super markets, etc.) as opposed to neighborhoods. As laid out in Chapter Three, the method of the walking interview allowed me to conduct these for as long as the youth felt comfortable walking. In most cases, the walking interview yielded more information than the sedentary interviews that came before it. Work by Evans and Jones (2011) illustrates that data collected through walking interviews are profoundly influenced by the space in which they take place, which highlights the importance of environment and space in the lives of individuals. Their work further demonstrates the difference in the data collected about the same phenomena when collected through walking interviews versus sedentary interviews (walking interviews provide much richer data). Within the context of the current study, the increased information yielded from the walking interviews could have been due to a combination of factors. First, there was trust built between the youth and me through the previous interviews and time spent at the recruitment centers. Second, unlike the sedentary interviews where I was directing our conversations, the walking interviews were led and guided by the youth. This switch in the power dynamic put youth in control. Third, though unstructured, the walking interview had built-in prompts in that the environment allowed me to dig deeper with the youth. For example, on my walk with Isabel, who gave mostly one-word answers during the sedentary interviews, she was more engaged and talkative while walking. In fact, she was so engaged in the interview that we walked for three hours. Along the walk, I was



able to ask about landmarks, like the park by her childhood home, to prompt her to talk more about her family and childhood. Generally, youth reported back that they enjoyed the walking interview the most. This was best represented by Money Man: *Yo, Ms. Kalen, when we walking again? That was real, yo. That's how we get this shit changed. You seen how I live and you asking me those questions. That's how change happen. (Field note, 9/10/17)*

### **Complicating Neighborhood as an Aspect of Analysis**

Research on neighborhoods is made difficult by defining neighborhoods as an aspect of analysis. Sampson (2012) explicates this issue: “Neighborhoods are both chosen and allocated; defined by outsiders and insiders alike, often in contradiction to each other; they are both symbolically and structurally determined; large and small; overlapping or blurred in perceptual boundaries; relational; and ever changing in composition.” (p. 5)

As an aspect of analysis, neighborhoods are defined, in a sense, in two competing ways. The first is through socially agreed upon ecological, or physical, boundaries. For example, in Philadelphia, there are 157 “official neighborhoods”. The map below (Figure 9) displays the 157 neighborhoods recognized by the city:

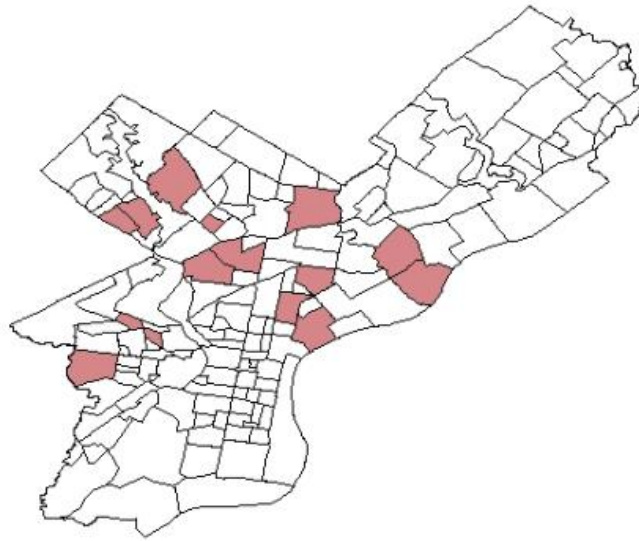


Figure 9. Neighborhood Map

Though these neighborhoods are officially recognized by the city, and are used by developers and realtors, they do not reflect the ways neighborhood definitions and boundaries are interpreted by residents, and thus, how they evolve. The highlighted areas on the above map represent neighborhoods mentioned by youth in over the course of this study. Sampson (2012) proposes defining neighborhoods in more theoretical terms as “geographic section of a larger community or region (i.e. City) that usually contains residents or institutions and has socially distinctive characteristics” (p 56). This definition recognizes the spatial importance of neighborhoods, while still allowing for residents to define neighborhood for themselves. Quantitative research on neighborhoods needs to focus on a fixed definition and region, but the qualitative design of this study allowed for neighborhood to evolve for each youth’s personal geography. The youth in this study talked about their neighborhoods, as well as those that held meaning for them or that they traveled to, using variety of nomenclatures. The path diagram below (Figure 10)

illustrates how neighborhood as an aspect of analysis evolved throughout the study, when compared to the highlighted map above one can see how neighborhoods are evolving for these youth:

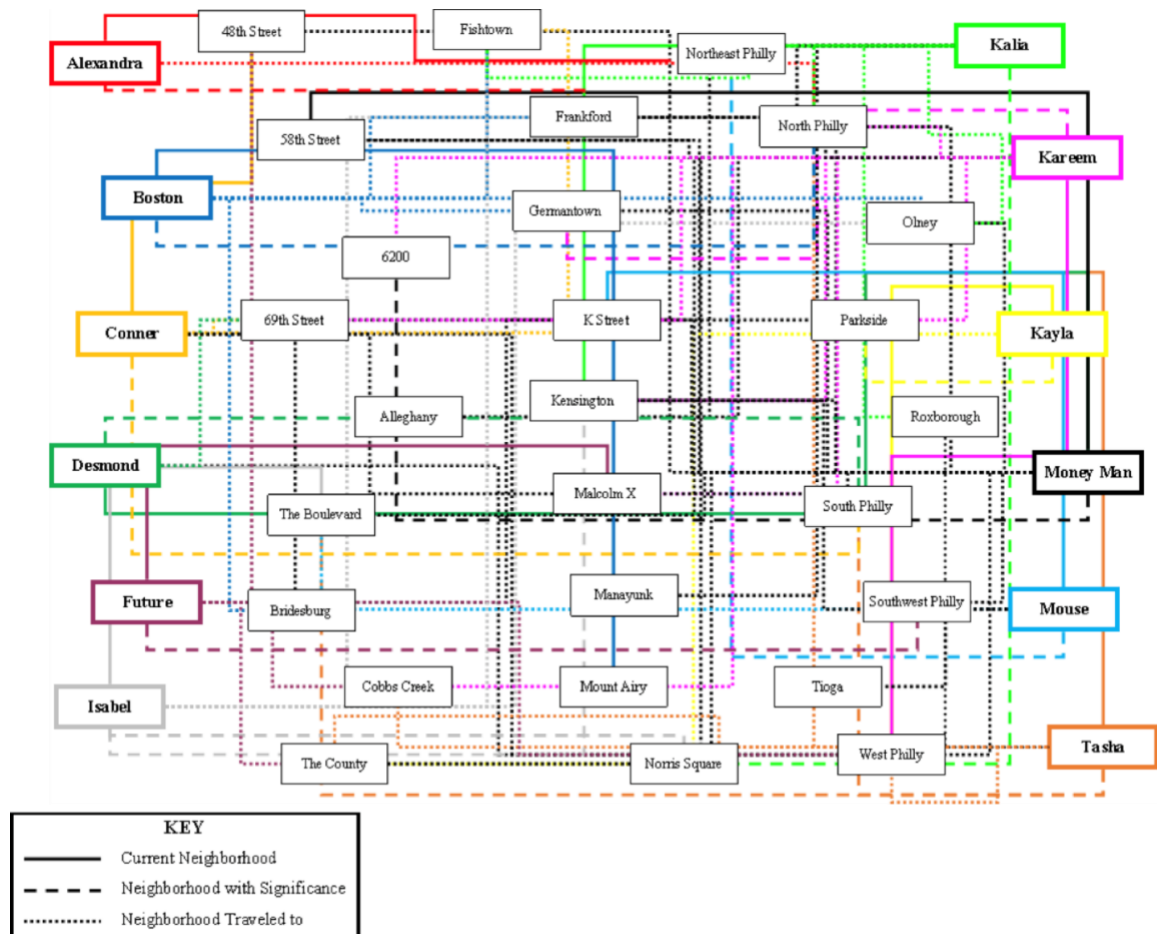


Figure 10: Participant Path Diagram

## Conclusion

This chapter highlights the methodological findings offered by this study. First, the use of technology to capture heart rate and place allowed for a deeper examination of what causes increases in heart rate, including fear, stress, and general wellbeing, and their connection to adverse experiences. The GPS technology offered insight into where and

how youth traveled throughout the city. Second, the walking interviews offered richer descriptions of the meaning of neighborhood and place for youth. Third, the qualitative nature of this study allowed for neighborhood as a unit of analysis to be evolve throughout and with each youth's personal geography.

## **Chapter 7: Discussion, Limitations, and Implications**

The overarching purpose of this research was to better understand the ways in which older adolescents experience and conceptualize violence and their neighborhoods, and to pilot the use of heart rate and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) technologies to measure stress and other physiological reactions spatially. To understand their experiences, this study utilized a multiple case study design and ethnographic methodologies, recruiting twelve older adolescents from two youth-focused centers in different regions of Philadelphia. The sample consisted of six female and six male adolescents, ranging in age from 16 to 21. On average, each participant was enrolled in the study for one month. Over the course of the month, I conducted 7 to 8 interviews with each participant: a baseline interview exploring their initial thoughts on their neighborhood and lives; four daily overview interviews that integrated the heart rate and GPS technologies; a family history interview; a walking interview in their neighborhood or a place of importance to them; and, when possible, a member check interview. I conducted eighty-five interviews in all, plus around twenty additional hours of neighborhood area visiting on my own and an estimated eighty hours of pre-study preparation in the participants' referral organizations.

Overall, study findings, as highlighted in Chapters Four, Five, and Six, portray that youths' experiences with violence and their meaning-making of the spaces in which they spend time are extremely complicated, evidencing intersecting challenges, and varying by each youths' personal geography in the city. As outlined in Chapter One, prior research typically focuses on younger, middle to early high school-aged youth, generally

males, and primarily utilizes quantitative methodologies to explore the impacts of neighborhood effects and violence. Within this work, violence has primarily been defined as interpersonal, using the World Health Organization's definition: "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a person or against a group or community that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation" (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002, p.5). Further, researchers have used the Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey (ACES) to explore the longitudinal impacts of witnessing violence and experiencing other traumas over the lifespan. Studies using the ACES interview adults about their childhood and adolescence retrospectively. Research using the ACES has demonstrated that longitudinal health outcomes are associated with experiencing trauma throughout the life course, include cardiovascular disease, obesity, early mortality, and diabetes. The findings from this study further extant literature by using qualitative methodology to focus on the experiences of older adolescents, female as well as male, and by examining their physiological reactions throughout their days to understand the mechanisms through which long-term detrimental health impacts take hold.

This chapter first reviews the study findings, demonstrating how they help to further our thinking about ways in which violence, neighborhoods, and health intersect and influence each other. Then, this chapter presents the limitations of the work, and finally, suggests the implications this work has for policy and practice.

## Discussion

**Violence Conceptualized.** Perhaps one of the most important findings of this study is a deeper understanding of not only the multiple contexts in which youth experience violence – including homes, schools, and neighborhoods – but the multiple types of violence experienced. As discussed earlier, literature overwhelmingly focuses on violence more narrowly defined as an interpersonal, physical act. While participants recounted multiple instances of such violence, their personal narratives also draw attention to a more nuanced and broad conceptualization of violence, both over their life course and in their everyday lives. As an example, Tasha's story provides a clear illustration of how multiple forms of violence – interpersonal, structural, and symbolic – intersect to create both imminent and long-lasting stressors, but neither her experiences nor her overall narrative are necessarily unique. Thus, one important and unique contribution of this work is its attention to the multitude of violent experiences youth suffer, with heart rate data providing evidence of how each of these forms of violence manifests into bodily stress.

When thinking about the implications of multiple forms of violence in one's development, it is useful to revisit Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (1977, 1979, 1986, 1999), and visualize the ways each form of violence impacts development at different systems levels. Figure 10 offers a version of this reimagined model based on this study's findings:

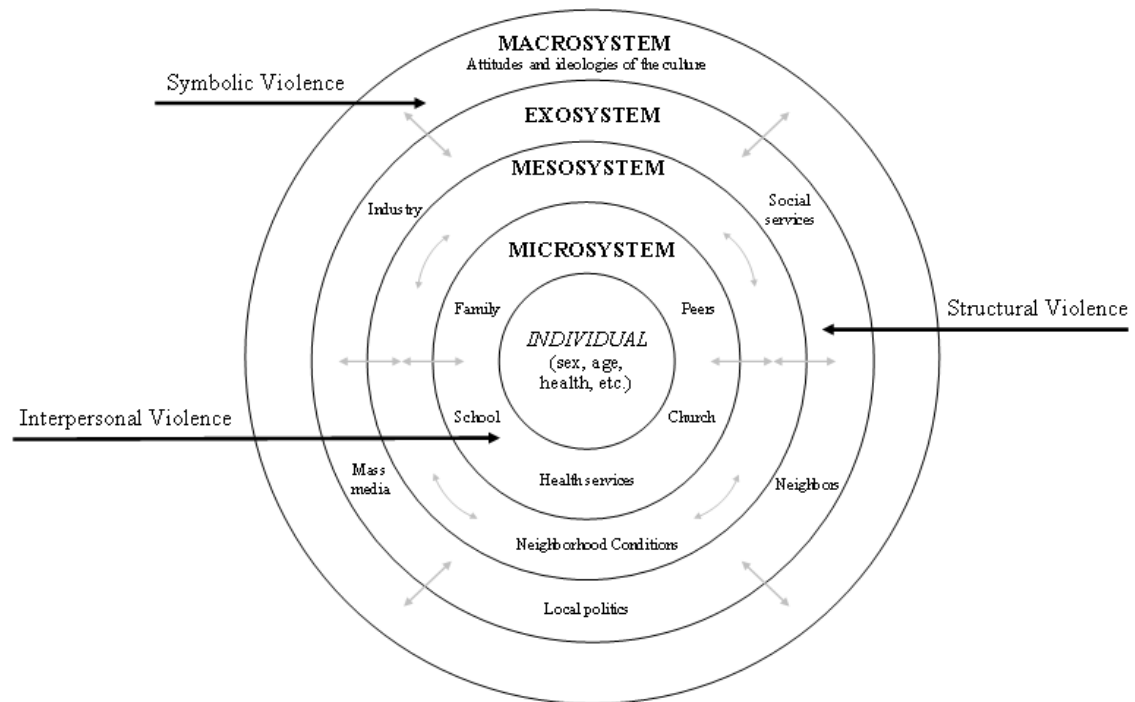


Figure 11. Reimagined Bronfenbrenner Ecological Theory Model

The above model not only illustrates how multiple forms of violence impact development, but also shows how restricting the definition of violence to interpersonal, physical acts limits the impact of developed interventions. As violence is currently defined, preventative measures are reaching the microsystem, and perhaps at times the mesosystem, but are leaving the exosystem (structural), and macrosystem (symbolic) unaddressed. When these systems are left unaddressed, youth can begin to internalize symbolic and structural violence, as seen in the narratives presented in Chapter Four, and particularly through the ways that the youth recount their experiences with police in relation to the interpersonal violence taking place in their neighborhoods. Youth reported feeling as though the police either ignored the violence in their neighborhood when they needed help, or as though they exasperated situations in such a way that the violence was then escalated. They reported feeling as though they could not rely on the police, the



state-sponsored responders to interpersonal violence, a prime example of structural violence. As described in Chapter Four, some youth had internalized negative interactions with the police, feeling as though these were their fault because of their race, gender, or both; an example of symbolic violence enacting on their identity development.

In addition to the findings presented in Chapter Four, impacts of symbolic and structural violence can also be seen in Chapter Five in relation to space. The metaphorical language and rhetoric used to describe spaces; loud versus quiet, clean versus dirty; represent how symbolic violence begins to take hold. Through use of this language, youth are expressing not just how they feel about their neighborhoods but also how they have internalized the worth of their neighborhoods as designated by how outsiders view it. For example, Alexandra directly connects the language of "clean" and "dirty" to racial markers of space. Desmond goes a step further, connecting it with the level of investments, or structural violence, in her neighborhood; lamenting the lack of green space and economic investment in her neighborhood. The symbolic violence of the rhetoric used to describe neighborhoods can lead to the structural violence of lessened state-sponsored investments in those spaces, which can then lead to the interpersonal violence witnessed by the youth in this study.

**Space, Development, and the “Neighborhood”.** Understandably, youth described enduring connections to their neighborhoods, as outlined in Chapter Five. Neighborhood plays a vital role in youth development, as young people tend to spend a lot of time in their neighborhoods. However, as a unit of analysis, "neighborhood" can be difficult to define. As illustrated in this study, neighborhood is an ever-evolving term,

changing with each youth by their personal geographies, or how they understood themselves and their neighborhoods in relation to the rest of the city. Figure 9 in Chapter Six illustrates how complicated these personal geographies were for the youth in this study. For example, while some youth would say that they were from "West Philadelphia", as they talked more about their neighborhood throughout the study they would refine the nomenclature more, for example, from "West Philadelphia", to "Parkside", to "48<sup>th</sup> Street", in the case of Conner. Their understandings of neighborhoods in the city, including their own and those that held significant meaning for them, added to their understandings of boundaries, both hard and soft, and thus influenced how they navigated space throughout the city.

Understanding boundaries in the city was also related to how the youth identified with their own neighborhoods. For example, in Chapter Five, Money Man and Future describe a "war" happening between the north and southside of West Philadelphia. Both young men strongly identified with their neighborhoods, often describing themselves in relation to the neighborhoods in which they grew up. For Money Man, this boundary meant that his movement was restricted, he stated that he felt "like a target" when he ventured to the northside. Future was mostly unbothered by the war - he rarely traveled to the northside - but felt that it made him a target for more police interactions.

The importance of neighborhoods for development was made clear by the narratives youth shared during the baseline and walking interviews. Most felt strong affective attachments to their neighborhoods, and in fact many identified their neighbors as family during the baseline interview. These affective ties are imperative for

development, as building strong relationships is an essential aspect of adolescence. Additionally, in many cases these strong ties led youth to attribute aspects of their identity with neighborhoods. For example, Boston felt a strong attachment to North Philadelphia, as he grew up there and most of his good friends still lived there. As described in Chapter Five, while he felt his personality was different from his friends because he no longer lived in North Philadelphia, he also felt like that neighborhood had imprinted on him a desire to protect his friends when needed. This relationship between neighborhood and identity was further explored in Kalia's story. Her strong ties to her neighborhood were tied to her memories of her family, as well as her Puerto Rican identity. As her neighborhood has begun to change through processes of gentrification, she felt a sense of loss - not just of the space she deeply cared about, but also of aspects of her identity that she felt would be erased by whiteness.

### **Limitations**

One of the limitations of this work was integrating the technological platforms of the GPS and heart rate devices. While both yielded valuable information, there were challenges uniquely associated with these devices. First, heart rate devices have been primarily developed for fitness purposes, which means their research capacity is limited by the type of data they can collect. For example, the heart rate device had the ability to track location, it would only do so in an "Activity Mode", such as running, which meant that it would begin to vibrate when the youth stopped moving and would drain the battery in under twelve hours. This made using a separate location tracking device a necessity, but that was also limited by tracking mode and at times would not collect data because it

could not connect to satellites. Further, the data collected by the heart rate device was limited in that I was not able to access all heart rate data collected, and thus relied on examining peaks (over 100 beats per minute) for each youth. As a measure of stress, heart rate is both useful in that it can detect nuances in stress levels throughout the day, and frustrating in that there are so many factors that determine one's resting heart rate throughout the day that it became impossible to determine what this was for each youth. Instead, I relied on the average resting heart rate for young adults (60 to 100 beats per minute) and examined peaks from this starting point. As this technology develops, these issues will likely be addressed.

Future work utilizing the technology and walking interview methods from this work should consider the impact of both on the populations at the center of the work. For example, in this study both the heart rate device and the location tracker were selected because they were inconspicuous for the youth, thus limiting the extent to which they could be targets of crime as a result of the devices. The protocol for the walking interview, using Velcro to hold the recorder to a clipboard, was also developed to protect youth so that they did not appear to be wearing a recording device or working with a police officer. This protocol was standard, but at the beginning of each walking interview I asked the youth if they were comfortable with the recorder set-up.

One important consideration for future work is the ways in which the landscape of violence (i.e. how violence manifests) in Philadelphia may be different than other cities. For example, in some cities traditional gangs may restrict movement to firm boundaries and have substantial impacts on how youth conceptualize space and neighborhood, in

addition to how they experience violence. Considering the importance of racial and gender identities, and positionality overall, for this study, future work should explore these themes more purposefully. For example, recruiting more youth from neighborhoods with a variety of socio-economic and racial demographics would expand the scope of the study and aid in the development of theory around space, violence, and identity formation in older adolescence.

### **Implications**

The findings from this study point to several implications in both the policy and practice arenas. First, the narrow framing of violence as interpersonal, physical events, has led to violence prevention policies and programs that emphasize the physical nature of violence. Framing violence in this individualistic way dictates the practice and policy interventions such that they are also focused on the individual. This narrative is so ingrained that even participants echoed it, attributing some forms of violence (e.g. deaths of friends) to results of individual behaviors. From a policy perspective, this can lead to the inclusion of harmful rhetoric embedded within policies, and lead to practices that are unnecessarily punishing. For example, in Tasha's story we see how the organizational policy of Philadelphia's Child Protective Services to only investigate the mother in the case of potential child abuse became a harmful practice: Tasha internalized feeling like a "bad mother" and her case worker consistently put her in negative positions with the court. The findings also highlight the need for policymakers to be more thoughtful about the ways in which policies reinforce symbolic violence through rhetoric and structural violence through patterns of investment (or lack thereof) in neighborhoods throughout the

city. In terms of practice, the findings highlight the importance of interrogating violence beyond the interpersonal. Although there are times where the immediate threat of interpersonal, physical violence merits the removal of a client from a space, or requires immediate intervention in any sense, this should not perpetually be at the cost of thinking about the impacts of symbolic and structural violence on clients. Further, the findings reiterate the need for social workers to investigate violence as it is experienced in multi-contexts, not solely in the milieu in which they work or where their organizations are located.

Second, the spatial findings emphasize the importance of place for youth. From a practice prospective, the findings indicate the need for social service organizations to work with their clientele when defining catchment areas such that they are being responsive to the evolving boundaries of neighborhoods and responsive to the needs of the populations which they serve. From a policy perspective, the findings demonstrate the importance of place-centered investments. For example, the nonprofit recreation center in Kensington that served as a recruitment site for this study fills an important need; there is no city sponsored recreation center in Kensington for youth. This lack of investment sends a clear signal to the youth who reside there about their worth in relation to other neighborhoods in the city.

The findings of this study emphasize the need for social work education to continue to stress the person-in-environment model, such that future social workers are trained to investigate what is happening for clients beyond the reasons the client is working with them. Such a narrow view of client-centered work can lead to

individualized thought patterns that begin to ignore structural issues. The findings also highlight the importance of incorporating issues of social equity into social work education such that issues such as symbolic and structural violence do not fall outside a social worker's expertise.

## Appendices

### Appendix A. Introductory Interview

**Icebreaker: give the participant a map of their neighborhood; walk them through an activity where they draw the “boundaries” of their neighborhood on the map.**

Hi! Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. Today I’d like to go over what the project is, learn a little more about you, and answer any questions you might have for me.

I’d like to hear from you what it’s like living in your neighborhood. This study is about learning about what you experience everyday in Philadelphia. Each time we meet, I’ll be asking you about what you did during the day, where you went, what you saw, how you felt, and what you think about the city and your neighborhood. I’ll be writing and speaking about this research, and I’d like to keep your identity private.

First, what would you like me to call you when I talk and write about this research? **(should be a first name, not a copyrighted name or one connected with a famous individual)**

(1) To get started, could you tell me a little bit about yourself?

- (a) *What is your birthdate?*
- (b) *What was grade are you in? OR When did you leave school?*
- (c) *Are you currently working?*
  - (i) *Where do you work?*
  - (ii) *What hours do you work?*
- (d) *Are you a parent?*
  - (i) *Who is usually watches your child?*
  - (ii) *What’s it like to be a parent?*
- (e) *Who do you live with?*
  - (i) *How long have you lived with XX?*
  - (ii) *What’s it like to live there?*

(2) Could you tell me about your neighborhood?

- (a) *What do you consider your neighborhood?*
- (b) *How long have you lived in your neighborhood?*
  - (i) *What other neighborhoods have you lived in?*
  - (ii) *Do you split time between neighborhoods? (If yes, ask prompt g-i)*
- (c) *What do you think of when you think about your neighborhood?*
- (d) *How would you describe your neighborhood?*
- (e) *If your cousin who wasn’t from Philly asked you about your neighborhood, what would you tell them?*
- (f) *How do you think your friends would describe your neighborhood?*



*(g) How would XX (either whom they live with or an important person mentioned above) describe your neighborhood?*

*(h) What other neighborhoods do you spend time in?*

*(i) How do these neighborhoods feel in relation to your neighborhood?*

*(i) What's good about your neighborhood?*

(3) How do you feel about your neighborhood?

*(a) How safe do you consider your neighborhood?*

*(b) What things are there to do in your neighborhood?*

*(c) Could you tell me a little bit about your neighbors?*

*(d) What do you think other people in the city think about your neighborhood?*

*(e) Do you feel differently about your neighborhood at night versus the day?*

(4) Could you tell me a little bit about your friends?

*(a) What neighborhoods do they live in?*

*(b) Do you spend time in their neighborhoods?*

*(c) What kinds of things do you do together?*

(5) Tell me about an average day during the week?

*(a) How about a weekend day?*

*(b) Where do you go?*

*(c) Who do you go with?*

*(d) What do you think about when you travel from place to place?*

**(6) Now I'd like to ask you some questions that other researchers in Philadelphia are asking youth like you to better understand the things that you experience. Some of these questions may make you upset or uncomfortable. You do not have to answer any question that are you not comfortable answering.**

1. Did you feel safe in your neighborhood (READ LIST)? (IF RESPONDENT MENTIONS HAVING LIVED IN MULTIPLE NEIGHBORHOODS WHILE GROWING UP ASK: Overall, did you feel safe in the neighborhoods you grew up in?)

1 All of the time

2 Most of the time

3 Some of the time, or

4 None of the time

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know

R (DO NOT READ) Refused

2. Did you feel people in your neighborhood looked out for each other, stood up for each other, and could be trusted (READ LIST, IF NECESSARY)? (IF RESPONDENT MENTIONS HAVING LIVED IN MULTIPLE NEIGHBORHOODS WHILE GROWING UP ASK: Overall, did you feel people in the neighborhoods you grew up in looked out for each other...?)

- 1 All of the time
- 2 Most of the time
- 3 Some of the time, or
- 4 None of the time
- D (DO NOT READ) Don't know
- R (DO NOT READ) Refused

3. How often were you bullied by a peer or classmate? (READ LIST, IF NECESSARY)?

- 1 All of the time
- 2 Most of the time
- 3 Some of the time, or
- 4 None of the time
- D (DO NOT READ) Don't know
- R (DO NOT READ) Refused

4. How often, if ever did you see or hear someone being beaten up, stabbed, or shot in real life? Would you say (READ LIST)?

- 1 Many times
- 2 A few times
- 3 Once, or
- 4 Never
- R (DO NOT READ) Refused

Now please think about your childhood, in general, not just your neighborhood or community.

FOR Q5-6: While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life, how true were each of the following statements?

5. There was someone in your life who helped you feel important or special. Was this (READ LIST)?

- 1 Very often true
- 2 Often true
- 3 Sometimes true
- 4 Rarely true, or
- 5 Never true
- D (DO NOT READ) Don't know
- R (DO NOT READ) Refused

6. Your family sometimes cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money in the budget for food. Was this (READ LIST)?

- 1 Very often true
- 2 Often true
- 3 Sometimes true

- 4 Rarely true, or
- 5 Never true
- D (DO NOT READ) Don't know
- R (DO NOT READ) Refused

Sometimes people are treated badly, not given respect, or are considered inferior because of the color of their skin, because they speak a different language or have an accent, or because they come from a different country or culture.

7. While you were growing up during your first 18 years of life how often did you feel that you were treated badly or unfairly because of your race or ethnicity? Would you say...? (READ LIST)

- 1 Very often true
- 2 Often true
- 3 Sometimes true
- 4 Rarely true, or
- 5 Never true
- D (DO NOT READ) Don't know
- R (DO NOT READ) Refused

Again, I want to remind you that the next questions refer to the time period while you were growing up in your first 18 years of life. During your first 18 years of life:

8. Did you live with anyone who was depressed or mentally ill?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure
- R (DO NOT READ) Refused

9. Did you live with anyone who was suicidal (IF NECESSARY: during your first 18 years of life)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure
- R (DO NOT READ) Refused

10. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic (IF NECESSARY: during your first 18 years of life)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure
- R (DO NOT READ) Refused

Still looking back to your first 18 years of life...

11. Did you live with anyone who used illegal street drugs or who abused prescription medications?

1 Yes

2 No

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure

R (DO NOT READ) Refused

12. Did you live with anyone who served time or was sentenced to serve time in a prison, jail, or other correctional facility?

1 Yes

2 No

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure

R (DO NOT READ) Refused

13. Were you ever in foster care? (IF NECESSARY: during your first 18 years of life)?

1 Yes

2 No

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure

R (DO NOT READ) Refused

Sometimes physical blows occur between parents or other adults in the house. FOR Q14-Q16: While you were growing up, that is during your first 18 years of life...

14. How often, if ever, did you see or hear a parent, step parent or another adult who was helping to raise you being yelled at, screamed at, sworn at, insulted or humiliated? Would you say...(READ LIST)

1 Many times

2 A few times

3 Once, or

4 Never

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure

R (DO NOT READ) Refused

15. How often, if ever, did you see or hear in your home a parent, step parent or another adult who was helping raise you being slapped, kicked, punched or beaten up? (READ LIST)

1 Many times

2 A few times

3 Once, or

4 Never

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure

R (DO NOT READ) Refused

16. How often, if ever, did you see or hear a parent, step parent or another adult who was helping to raise you being hit or cut with an object, such as a stick or cane, bottle, club, knife, or gun? (READ LIST, IF NECESSARY)

1 Many times

2 A few times

3 Once, or

4 Never

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure

R (DO NOT READ) Refused

Sometimes parents or other adults hurt children.

While you were growing up, that is during your first 18 years of life, how often, if ever, did a parent, step-parent, or another adult living in your home...

17. Swear at you, insult you, or put you down? (READ LIST)

1 More than once

2 Once, or

3 Never

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure

R (DO NOT READ) Refused

How often, if ever, did a parent, step-parent, or another adult living in your home...

18. Push, grab, shove, or slap you? (READ LIST)

1 More than once

2 Once, or

3 Never

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure

R (DO NOT READ) Refused

19. Hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured? (READ LIST)

1 More than once

2 Once, or

3 Never

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure

R (DO NOT READ) Refused

20. Act in a way that made you afraid that you would be physically hurt? (READ LIST)

1 More than once

2 Once, or

3 Never

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure  
R (DO NOT READ) Refused

Some people, while growing up in their first 18 years of life, had a sexual experience with an adult or someone at least five years older than themselves. These experiences may have involved a relative, family friend, or stranger. During the first 18 years of life, did an adult or older relative, family friend or stranger who was at least five years older than yourself ever...?

21. Touch or fondle you in a sexual way or have you touch their body in a sexual way?

1 Yes

2 No

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure

R (DO NOT READ) Refused

22. Attempt to have or actually have any type of sexual intercourse, oral, anal, or vaginal, with you?

1 Yes

2 No

D (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Not Sure

R (DO NOT READ) Refused

(7) Could you try on the watch? Let's walk through how the watch works and what data we will review together every other day.

**Get baseline heart rate**

## Appendix B. Family History Interview Guide

The purpose of this interview is to get a sense of how your family history maps on to larger historical events.

\*\*\*Have participant list out their family members (family tree). For each family member listed:

1. When and where was this person born?
2. Who lived in their house growing up?
3. Where did they live while growing up?
  - a. Did they move anywhere? Why?
4. What schools did the person attend?
  - a. At what grade level did they stop?
  - b. Did the person go to university? Graduate School?
5. Did the person grow up with regular formal religious involvement? What kind?
6. What did / does the person do for a living?
  - a. Did this (has this) change/d over the course of their working years?
7. Was (is) the person involved in other activities outside of work? What were they?
8. Did the person marry?
9. Did the person have children?
10. When, where, and how did the person die (if deceased)?

## Appendix C. Assent to Participate in Research

### **ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

#### **Study of Neighborhoods and Youth**

1. My name is Kalen Flynn.
2. We are asking you to take part in a research study because we are trying to learn more about what teens think about their neighborhoods and how they experience their neighborhoods.
3. If you agree to be in this study you will wear a watch with a heart rate monitor for six days and will meet with me three times during those six days. When we meet we will look at a map of where you went and what your heart rate was like as you traveled. I will ask you about what you experienced. After these six days, I will ask you to meet with me a few more times in your neighborhood so I can hear from you what you think about and what's important to you about your neighborhood. The entire study will take about three to four weeks.
4. I will ask you each time we meet if it is okay for me to audio record our meetings. If you are not comfortable with any meeting being audio recording, that is okay!
5. Some examples of what I will ask you are:
  - Tell me about what you like to do in your neighborhood.
  - If you were to describe your neighborhood to someone who wasn't from Philly, what would you say?
  - Tell me about what's happened since the last time we met.
  - Who were you with on your way to (school, work, home)?
6. While we are talking, you may remember something that makes you feel sad or angry, that is okay. We will talk to you about it and will offer help to you and your parents if needed. There is a chance that being seen with me may make you feel uncomfortable. If this happens, we can talk about what could help, like crossing the street, or we can stop talking if that is what you want.
7. Everything you tell me will be private, unless you tell me you are planning to hurt yourself or someone else. If you tell me that I will need to tell your parents and contact authorities.



8. To help us protect your privacy, we have obtained a Certificate of Confidentiality from the National Institutes of Health. We can use the Certificate to legally refuse to disclose information that may identify you in any federal, state, or local civil, criminal, administrative, legislative, or other proceedings, for example, if there is a court subpoena. We will use the Certificate to resist demands for information that would identify you, with the exception of if you intend to hurt yourself or someone else.
9. You will choose a fake name. Everything you tell me will be connected to that fake name so no one will know it is you. Even if I present your story or write about it, I will only use your fake name.
10. If you participate in this study, you will receive a total of \$60 in American Express gift cards for your time.
11. Please talk this over with your parent or guardian before you decide whether or not to participate. We will also ask your parent or guardian to give their permission for you to take part in this study. But even if your parent or guardian says “yes” you can still decide no to be in this study.
12. If you don’t want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Remember, being in this study is up to you and no one will be upset if you don’t want to participate or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.
13. You can ask any questions that you have about this study. If you have a question later that you didn’t think of now, you can call me: (GOOGLE NUMBER TO GO HERE) ; or ask me the next time you see me.
14. Signing your name below means that you agree to be in this study. You and your parents will be given a copy of this form after you sign it.

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Participant

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Date

---

Investigator

---

Date

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University of Pennsylvania Informed Consent Form

**Title of the Research Study: Study of Neighborhoods and Youth**  
**Principal Investigator: Kalen Flynn, MSW, MSSP, School of Social Policy and Practice, University of Pennsylvania (GOOGLE NUMBER TO GO HERE)**

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation is voluntary which means you can choose whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate or not to participate there will be no loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Before you need to consent to participate, you will need to know the purpose of the study, the possible risks and benefits of being in the study and what you will have to do if you decide to participate. The research team is going to talk with you about the study and give you this consent form to read. You do not have to make a decision now; you can take the permission form home and share it with family.

If you do not understand what you are reading, please do not sign it. Please ask the researcher to explain anything you do not understand, including any language contained in this form. If you decide consent to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and a copy will be given to you. Keep this form, in it you will find contact information and answers to questions about the study. You may ask to have this form read to you.

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**What is the purpose of the study?**

We are interested in learning about how teens experience their neighborhoods and what causes them stress as they walk around their neighborhoods.

**Why was I asked to participate in the study?**

You are being asked to join this study because you live in Strawberry Mansion, Kensington, or Nicetown, and are 18 years old.

**How long will I be in the study?**

Your participation in the study will last about three to four weeks. This will include a four day period where you will wear a watch with heart rate monitor and carry a GPS tracker, and a total of about six to ten meetings with me to talk about what you experience and how you think about your neighborhood.

**Where will the study take place?**

I will meet you either at your home, the youth center, or a place in the neighborhood where you feels comfortable.

**What will I be asked to do?**

You will be asked to wear a watch with a heart rate monitor for four days. You will also be asked to meet with me for 45 minutes to an hour and half between six and ten times.

**What are some examples of what I will be asked?**

Some examples of questions we will ask you are:

- Tell me about what you like to do in your neighborhood.
- If you were to describe your neighborhood to someone who wasn't from Philly, what would you say?
- Tell me about what's happened since the last time we met.
- Who were you with on your way to (school, work, home)?

**What are the risks?**

It is possible that you may remember something upsetting that happened to you in the neighborhood, and this could make you upset. If you have an extreme emotional reaction during the study, we will offer you resources for counseling services. There is also a small risk that being seen with the researcher could cause you embarrassment. Other than this, there is not anything risky about participating in an interview. If you want to stop participation at any time that is okay.

**How will I benefit from the study?**

There are no direct benefits of participating. We hope this study this will help us learn about how teens think about their neighborhoods and stress.

**What happens if I do not want to participant in the research study?**

Your participation is completely voluntary.

There is no penalty if you choose not to participate.

**When is the study over? Can I leave the study before it ends?**

The study is expected to end after all the information has been collected. The study may be stopped without your consent for the following reasons:

- The PI feels it is best for your safety and/or health-you will be informed of the reasons why.
- The PI, the sponsor or the Office of Regulatory Affairs at the University of Pennsylvania can stop the study anytime

You have the right to stop participating in the research study at anytime. There is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decide to do so.

### **How will confidentiality be maintained and my privacy be protected?**

I will do my best to make sure that the personal information obtained during this research study will be kept private. You will choose a fake name at the beginning of the study and all information collected will be associated with that fake name. Even if I present their story or write about it, I will only use your fake name. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, the University of Pennsylvania will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information.

To help us protect your privacy, we have obtained a Certificate of Confidentiality from the National Institutes of Health. We can use the Certificate to legally refuse to disclose information that may identify you in any federal, state, or local civil, criminal, administrative, legislative, or other proceedings, for example, if there is a court subpoena. We will use the Certificate to resist demands for information that would identify you, with the exception of if you intend to hurt yourself or someone else.

### **Will I have to pay for anything?**

There is no cost to participate in this study.

### **Will I be paid for being in this study?**

You will receive a total of \$60 in American Express gift cards to thank you for your time. If you decide you would like to participate and then change your mind, that is fine. You can stop the study at anytime and still receive compensation in proportion to your time in the study.

### **Who can I call with questions, complaints or if I'm concerned about my rights as a research subject?**

If you have questions, concerns or complaints regarding your child's participation in this research study or if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you should speak with Kalen Flynn (267) 417-6731. If a member of the research team cannot be reached or you want to talk to someone other than those working on the study,

you may contact the Office of Regulatory Affairs with any question, concerns or complaints at the University of Pennsylvania by calling (215) 898-2614.

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When you sign this document, you are agreeing to allow your child to take part in this research study. If you have any questions or there is something you do not understand, please ask. You will receive a copy of this consent document.

Print Name

Signature

Date

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